

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR."—SHAKESPEARE.

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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A DAY'S RIDE: A LIFE'S ROMANCE.

CHAPTER VIII.

So absorbed was I in the reflections of which my last chapter is the record, that I utterly forgot how time was speeding, and perceived at last, to my great surprise, that I had strayed miles away from the Rosary, and that evening was already near. The spires and roofs of a town were distant about a mile at a bend of the river, and for this I now made, determined on no account to turn back, for how could I ever again face those who had read the terrible narrative of the priest's letter, and before whom I could only present myself as a cheat and impostor?

"No," thought I, "my destiny points onward—and to Blondel; nothing shall turn me from my path." Less than an hour's walking brought me to the town, of which I had but time to learn the name—New Ross. I left it in a small steamer for Waterford, a little vessel in correspondence with the mail packet for Milford, and which I learned would sail that evening at nine.

The same night saw me seated on the deck bound for England. On the deck, I say, for I had need to husband my resources, and travel with every imaginable economy, not only because my resources were small in themselves, but that having left all that I possessed of clothes and baggage at the Rosary, I should be obliged to acquire a complete outfit on reaching England.

It was a calm night, with a starry sky and a tranquil sea, and, when the cabin passengers had gone down to their berths, the captain did not oppose my stealing "aft" to the quarter-deck, where I could separate myself from the somewhat riotous company of the harvest labourers that thronged the forepart of the vessel. He saw, with that instinct a sailor is eminently gifted with, that I was not of that class by which I was surrounded, and with a ready courtesy he admitted me to the privilege of isolation.

"You are going to enlist, I'll be bound," said he, as he passed me in his short deck walk. "Ain't I right?"

"No," said I; "I'm going to seek my fortune."

"Seek your fortune!" he repeated, with a slighting sort of laugh. "One used to read about fellows doing that in story books when a

child, but it's rather strange to hear of it now-a-days."

"And may I presume to ask why should it be more strange now than formerly? Is not the world pretty much what it used to be? Is not the drama of life the same stock piece our forefathers played ages ago? Are not the actors and the actresses made up of the precise materials their ancestors were? Can you tell me of a new sentiment, a new emotion, or even a new crime? Why, therefore, should there be a seeming incongruity in reviving any feature of the past?"

"Just because it won't do, my good friend," said he, bluntly. "If the law catches a fellow lounging about the world in these times, it takes him up for a vagabond."

"And what can be finer, grander, or freer than a vagabond?" I cried, with enthusiasm. "Who, I would ask you, sees life with such philosophy? Who views the wiles, the snares, the petty conflicts of the world with such a reflective calm as his? Caring little for personal indulgence, not solicitous for self-gratification, he has both the spirit and the leisure for observation. Diogenes was the type of the vagabond, and see how successive ages have acknowledged his wisdom."

"If I had lived in *his* day, I'd have set him picking oakum for all that!" he replied.

"And probably, too, would have sent the blind old bard to the crank," said I.

"I'm not quite sure of whom you are talking," said he; "but if he was a good ballad-singer, I'd not be hard on him."

"O! Menin aidee Theos Peliadeo Achilleos!" spouted I out, in rapture.

"That ain't high Dutch," asked he, "is it?"

"No," said I, proudly. "It is ancient Greek—the godlike tongue of an immortal race."

"Immortal rascals!" he broke in. "I was in the fruit trade up in the Levant there, and such scoundrels as these Greek fellows I never met in my life."

"By what and whom made so?" I exclaimed, eagerly. "Can you point to a people in the world who have so long resisted the barbarising influence of a base oppression? Was there ever a nation so imbued with high civilisation, as to be enabled for centuries of slavery to preserve the traditions of its greatness? Have we the record of any race but this, who could rise

from the slough of degradation to the dignity of a people?"

"You've been a play-actor, I take it?" asked he, dryly.

"No, sir, never!" replied I, with some indignation.

"Well, then, in the Methodist line? You've done a stroke of preaching, I'll be sworn."

"You would be perjured in that case, sir," I rejoined, as haughtily.

"At all events, an auctioneer," said he, fairly puzzled in his speculations.

"Equally mistaken there," said I, calmly; "bred in the midst of abundance, nurtured in affluence, and educated with all the solicitous care that a fond parent could bestow——"

"Gammon!" said he, bluntly. "You are one of the swell mob in distress!"

"Is this like distress?" said I, drawing forth my purse in which were seventy-five sovereigns, and handing it to him. "Count over that, and say how just and how generous are your suspicions."

He gravely took the purse from me, and, stooping down to the binnacle light, counted over the money, scrutinising carefully the pieces as he went.

"And who is to say this isn't 'swag?'" said he, as he closed the purse.

"The easiest answer to that," said I, "is, would it be likely for a thief to show his booty, not merely to a stranger, but to a stranger who suspected him?"

"Well, that is something, I confess," said he, slowly.

"It ought to be more—it ought to be everything. If distrust were not a debasing sentiment, obstructing the impulses of generosity and even invading the precincts of justice, you would see far more reason to confide in, than to disbelieve me."

"I've been done pretty often afore now," he muttered, half to himself.

"What a fallacy that is!" cried I, contemptuously. "Was not the pittance that some crafty impostor wrung from your compassion well repaid to you in the noble self-consciousness of your generosity? Did not your venison on that day taste better when you thought of his pork chop? Had not your Burgundy gained flavour by the memory of the glass of beer that was warming the half chilled heart in *his* breast? Oh, the narrow mockery of fancying that we are not better by being deceived!"

"How long is it since you had your head shaved?" he asked, dryly.

"I have never been the inmate of an asylum for lunatics," said I, divining and answering the impertinent insinuation.

"Well, I own you are a rum 'un," said he, half musingly.

"I accept even this humble tribute to my originality," said I, with a sort of proud defiance. "I am well aware how *he* must be regarded who dares to assert his own individuality."

"I'd be very curious to know," said he, after a pause of several minutes, "how a fellow of

your stamp sets to work about gaining his livelihood? What's his first step? how does he go about it?"

I gave no other answer than a smile of scornful meaning.

"I meant nothing offensive," resumed he, "but I really have a strong desire to be enlightened on this point."

"You are doubtless impressed with the notion," said I, boldly, "that men possessed of some distinct craft, or especial profession, are alone needed by the world of their fellows. That one must be doctor, or lawyer, or baker, or shoemaker, to gain his living, as if life had no other wants than to be clothed, and fed, and physicked, and litigated. As if humanity had not its thousand emotional moods, its wayward impulses, its trials and temptations, all of them more needing guidance, support, direction, and counsel, than the sickest patient needs a physician. It is on this world that I throw myself; I devote myself to guide infancy, to console age, to succour the orphan, and support the widow—morally, I mean."

"I begin to suspect you are a most artful vagabond," said he, half angrily.

"I have long since reconciled myself to the thought of an unjust appreciation," said I. "It is the consolation dull men accept when confronted with those of original genius. You can't help confessing that all your distrust of me has grown out of the superiority of my powers, and the humble figure you have presented in comparison with me."

"Do you rank modesty amongst these same powers?" he asked, slyly.

"Modesty I reject," said I, "as being a conventional form of hypocrisy."

"Come down below," said he, "and take a glass of brandy-and-water. It's growing chilly here, and we shall be the better of something to cheer us."

Seated in his comfortable little cabin, and with a goodly array of liquors before me to choose from, I really felt a self-confidence in the fact that, if I were not something out of the common, I could not then be there. "There must be in my nature," thought I, "that element which begets success, or I could not always find myself in situations so palpably beyond the accidents of my condition."

My host was courtesy itself; no sooner was I his guest than he adopted towards me a manner of perfect politeness. No more allusions to my precarious mode of life, never once a reference to my adventurous future. Indeed, with an almost artful exercise of good breeding he turned the conversation towards himself, and gave me a sketch of his own life.

It was not in any respects a remarkable one; though it had its share of those mishaps and misfortunes which every sailor must have confronted. He was wrecked in the Pacific, and robbed in the *Havannah*; had his crew desert him at San Francisco, and was boarded by Riff pirates, and sold in Barbary just as every other blue jacket used to be, and I lis-

tened to the story, only marvelling what a dreary sameness pervades all these narratives. Why, for one trait of the truthful to prove his tale, I could have invented fifty. There were no little touches of sentiment or feeling; no relieving lights of human emotion in his story. I never felt, as I listened, any wish that he should be saved from shipwreck, baffle his persecutors, or escape his captors; and I thought to myself, "This fellow has certainly got no narrative gusto." Now for my turn: we had each of us partaken freely of the good liquor before us. The captain in his quality of taker, I, in my capacity of listener, had filled and refilled several times. There was not anything like inebriety, but there was that amount of exultation, a stage higher than mere excitement, which prompts men, at least men of temperaments like mine, not to suffer themselves to occupy rear rank positions, but at any cost to become foreground and prominent figures.

"You have heard of the M'Gillicuddys, I suppose?" asked I. He nodded, and I went on. "You see, then, at this moment before you the last of the race. I mean, of course, of the elder branch, for there are swarms of the others, well to do and prosperous also, and with fine estates and properties. I'll not weary you with family history. I'll not refer to that remote time when my ancestors wore the crown, and ruled the fair kingdom of Kerry. In the Annals of the Four Masters, and also in the Chronicles of Thealbogh O'Faundlem, you'll find a detailed account of our house. I'll simply narrate for you the immediate incident which has made me what you see me—an outcast and a beggar :

"My father was the tried and trusted friend of that noble-hearted but mistaken man Lord Edward Fitzgerald. The famous attempt of the year 'eight was concerted between them, and all the causes of its failure, secret as they are and for ever must be, are known to him who now addresses you. I dare not trust myself to talk of these times or things lest I should by accident let drop what might prove strictly confidential. I will but recount one incident, and that a personal one, of the period. On the night of Lord Edward's capture, my father, who had invited a friend—deep himself in the conspiracy—to dine with him, met his guest on the steps of his hall door. Mr. Hammond—this was his name—was pale and horror-struck, and could scarcely speak, as my father shook his hand. 'Do you know what has happened, Mac?' said he to my father. 'Lord Edward is taken, Major Sirr and his party have tracked him to his hiding-place; they have got hold of all our papers, and we are lost. By this time to-morrow every man of us will be within the walls of Newgate.'

"Don't look so gloomily, Tom," said my father, "Lord Edward will escape them yet; he's not a bird to be snared so easily; and after all we shall find means to slip our cables too. Come in, and enjoy your sirloin and a good glass of port, and you'll view the world more pleasantly." With a little encouragement of this

sort he cheered him up, and the dinner passed off agreeably enough; but still my father could see that his friend was by no means at his ease, and at every time the door opened he would start with a degree of surprise that augured anxiety of some coming event. From these and other signs of uneasiness in his manner, my father drew his own conclusions, and with a quick intelligence of look communicated his suspicions to my mother, who was herself a keen and shrewd observer.

"Do you think, Matty," said he, as they sat over their wine, "that I could find a bottle of the old green seal if I was to look for it in the cellar? It has been upwards of forty years there, and I never touch it save on especial occasions; but an old friend like Hammond deserves such a treat."

"My father fancied that Hammond grew paler as he thus alluded to their old friendship, and he gave my mother a rapid glance of his sharp eye, and, taking the cellar key, he left the room. Immediately outside the door, he hastened to the stable, saddled and bridled a horse, and slipping quietly out, he rode for the sea-coast, near the Skerries. It was sixteen miles from Dublin, but he did the distance within the hour. And well was it for him that he employed such speed! With a liberal offer of money, and the gold watch he wore, he secured a small fishing-smack to convey him over to France, for which he sailed immediately. I have said it was well that he employed such speed; for, after waiting with suppressed impatience for my father's return from the cellar, Hammond expressed to my mother his fears lest my father might have been taken ill. She tried to quiet his apprehensions, but the very calmness of her manner served only to increase them. 'I can bear this no longer,' cried he at last, rising in much excitement from his chair; 'I must see what has become of him!' At the same moment the door was suddenly flung open, and an officer of police in full uniform presented himself. 'He has got away, sir,' said he, addressing Hammond; 'the stable-door is open, and one of the horses missing.'

"My mother, from whom I heard the story, had only time to mutter a 'Thank God!' before she fainted. On recovering her senses, she found herself alone in the room. The traitor Hammond and the police had left her without even calling the servants to her aid."

"And your father—what became of him?" asked the skipper, eagerly.

"He arrived in Paris in sorry plight enough; but, fortunately, Clarke, whose influence with the Emperor was unbounded, was a distant connexion of our family. By his intervention my father obtained an interview with his majesty, who was greatly struck by the adventurous spirit and daring character of the man; not the less so because he had the courage to disabuse the Emperor of many notions and impressions he had conceived about the readiness of Ireland to accept French assistance.

"Though my father would much have preferred taking service in the army, the Emperor,

who had strong prejudices against men becoming soldiers who had not served in every grade from the ranks upwards, opposed this intention, and employed him in a civil capacity. In fact, to his management were entrusted some of the most delicate and difficult secret negotiations; and he gained a high name for acuteness and honourable dealing. In recognition of his services, his name was inscribed in the Grand Livre for a considerable pension; but at the fall of the dynasty, this, with hundreds of others equally meritorious, was annulled; and my father, worn out with age and disappointment together, sank at last, and died at Dinant, where my mother was buried but a few years previously. Meanwhile, he was tried and found guilty of high treason in Ireland, and all his lands and other property forfeited to the Crown. My present journey was simply a pilgrimage to see the old possessions that once belonged to our race. It was my father's last wish that I should visit the ancient home of our family, and stand upon the hills that once acknowledged us as their ruler. He never desired that I should remain a French subject; a lingering love for his own country mingled in his heart with a certain resentment towards France, who had certainly treated him with ingratitude; and almost his last words to me were, 'Distrust the Gaul.' When I told you a while back that I was nurtured in affluence, it was so to all appearance; for my father had spent every shilling of his capital on my education, and I was under the firm conviction that I was born to a very great fortune. You may judge the terrible revulsion of my feelings when I learned that I had to face the world almost, if not actually, a beggar.

"I could easily have attached myself as a hanger-on of some of my well-to-do relations. Indeed, I will say for them, that they showed the kindest disposition to befriend me; but the position of a dependent would have destroyed every chance of happiness for me, and so I resolved that I would fearlessly throw myself upon the broad ocean of life, and trust that some sea current or favouring wind would bear me at last into a harbour of safety."

"What can you do?" asked the skipper, curiously.

"Everything, and nothing! I have, so to say, the 'sentiment' of all things in my heart, but am not capable of executing one of them. With the most correct ear, I know not a note of music, and though I could not cook you a chop, I have the most exquisite appreciation of a well-dressed dinner."

"Well," said he, laughing, "I must confess I don't suspect these to be exactly the sort of gifts to benefit your fellow-man."

"And yet," said I, "it is exactly to individuals of this stamp that the world accords its prizes. The impresario that provides the opera could not sing nor dance. The general who directs the campaign might be sorely puzzled how to clean his musket or pipeclay his belt. The great minister who imposes a tax might be totally unequal to the duty of applying its

provisions. Ask him to gauge a hogshead of spirits, for instance. *My* position is like *theirs*. I tell you, once more, the world wants men of wide conceptions and far-ranging ideas—men who look to great results and grand combinations."

"But, to be practical, how do you mean to breakfast to-morrow morning?"

"At a moderate cost, but comfortably: tea, rolls, two eggs, and a rumpsteak with fried potatoes."

"What's your name?" said he, taking out his note-book. "I mustn't forget you when I hear of you next."

"For the present, I call myself Potts—Mr. Potts, if you please."

"Write it here yourself," said he, handing me the pencil. And I wrote in a bold vigorous hand, "Algernon Sydney Potts," with the date.

"Preserve that autograph, captain," said I; "it is in no spirit of vanity I say it, but the day will come you'll refuse a ten-pound note for it."

"Well, I'd take a trifle less just now," said he, smiling.

He sat for some time gravely contemplating the writing, and at length, in a sort of half soliloquy, said, "Bob would like him—he would suit Bob." Then, lifting his head, he addressed me: "I have a brother in command of one of the P. and O. steamers—just the fellow for *you*. He has got ideas pretty much like your own about success in life, and won't be persuaded that he isn't the first seaman in the English navy; or that he hasn't a plan to send Cherbourg and its breakwater sky high, at twenty-four hours' warning."

"An enthusiast—a visionary, I have no doubt," said I, contemptuously.

"Well, I think you might be more merciful in your judgment of a man of your own stamp," retorted he, laughing. "At all events, it would be as good as a play to see you together. If you should chance to be at Malta, or Marseilles, when the Clarence touches there, just ask for Captain Rogers; tell him you know me, that will be enough."

"Why not give me a line of introduction to him?" said I, with an easy indifference. "These things serve to clear away the awkwardness of a self-presentation."

"I don't care if I do," said he, taking a sheet of paper, and beginning "Dear Bob,"—after which he paused and deliberated, muttering the words "Dear Bob" three or four times over below his breath.

"Dear Bob," said I, aloud, in the tone of one dictating to an amanuensis—"This brief note will be handed to you by a very valued friend of mine, Algernon Sydney Potts, a man so completely after your own heart that I feel a downright satisfaction in bringing you together."

"Well, that ain't so bad," said he, as he uttered the last words which fell from his pen—"in bringing you together."

"Go on," said I, dictatorially, and continued: "Thrown by a mere accident myself into his

society, I was so struck by his attainments, the originality of his views, and the wide extent of his knowledge of life—"Have you *that* down?"

"No," said he, in some confusion; "I am only at 'entertainments.'"

"I said 'at-tainments,' sir," said I, rebukingly, and then repeating the passage word for word, till he had written it,—"that I conceived for him a regard and an esteem rarely accorded to others than our oldest friends." One word more: 'Potts, from certain circumstances, which I cannot here enter upon, may appear to you in some temporary inconvenience as regards money—'"

Here the captain stopped, and gave me a most significant look: it was at once an appreciation and an expression of drollery.

"Go on," said I, dryly. "'If so,'" resumed I, "'be guardedly cautious neither to notice his embarrassment nor allude to it; above all, take especial care that you make no offer to remove the inconvenience, for he is one of those whose sensibilities are so fine, and whose sentiments so fastidious, that he could never recover in his own esteem the dignity compromised by such an incident.'"

"Very neatly turned," said he, as he re-read the passage. "I think that's quite enough."

"Ample. You have nothing more to do than sign your name to it."

He did this, with a verificatory flourish at foot, folded and sealed the letter, and handed it to me, saying,

"If it weren't for the handwriting Bob would never believe all that fine stuff came from *me*; but you'll tell him it was after three glasses of brandy-and-water that I dashed it off—that will explain everything."

I promised faithfully to make the required explanation, and then proceeded to make some inquiries about this brother Bob, whose nature was in such a close affinity with my own. I could learn, however, but little beyond the muttered acknowledgment that Bob was a "queer 'un," and that there was never his equal for "falling upon good luck, and spending it after," a description which, when applied to my own conscience, told an amount of truth that was actually painful.

"There's no saying," said I, as I pocketed the letter. "If this epistle should ever reach your brother's hand, my course in life is too wayward and uncertain for me to say in what corner of the earth fate may find me; but if we are to meet, you shall hear of it. Rogers"—I said this in all the easy familiarity which brandy inspired—"I'll tell your brother of the warm and generous hospitality you extended to me, at a time that, to all seeming, I needed such attentions—at a time, I say, when none but myself could know how independently I stood as regarded means; and of one thing be assured, Rogers, he whose caprice it now is to call himself Potts, is your friend, your fast friend, for life."

He wrung my hand cordially—perhaps it was the easiest way for an honest sailor, as he was,

to acknowledge the patronising tone of my speech—but I could plainly see that he was sorely puzzled by the situation, and possibly very well pleased that there was no third party to be a spectator of it.

"Throw yourself there on that sofa," said he, "and take a sleep." And with that piece of counsel he left me, and went up on deck.

OF RIGHT MIND.

I SHOULD like to know how many people in the world have absolutely healthy minds. I reckon up my friends and enemies upon my fingers, and, beginning with my best friend, or worst enemy, myself, find one with a twist here, one with a soreness there, one with this eccentricity, and one with that infirmity. Ideal health of body is not possessed by one in a million of civilised men, and I almost doubt whether there be a man in Europe with an absolutely healthy mind. If there be such a man, rely upon it he stands at the head of the class of social bores. For he must have, to be healthy, that abomination of desolation, a well-balanced mind, in which, because there is everything in equal proportion, there is nothing in agreeable excess. Anything like exclusive regard for a particular idea upsets the balance; and so it is that to the men whose minds are not whole, round, and perfect, we owe all the progress of the world.

There should be fuller recognition than there is yet of the set of truths that run from such a starting-point. Complete health of body is rare, though we know pretty well what to eat, drink, and avoid, in the way of corporal nourishment, and have not much power of interference with the growth of our own legs and arms. But we commit minds to absolute starvation; we bend, dwarf, maim, and otherwise disfigure or distort the ideas of the young, looking at schools too often as if they were jelly-moulds, and the young mind a jelly. The result to the mind is very much what it would be to the body if we grew infants in moulds for the improvement of their figures. We do not get improvement of the figure, but distortions of an unexpected form, and lasting sickness. The mind, which every word that reaches it affects, is meddled with so easily, so hardly understood, the signs of health or sickness in it are so undetermined by the multitude, that we should fall into the most hopeless confusion of wits but for the truth underlying social intercourse of every sort, that men and women are good fellows in the main, and that there is an unseen guiding and sustaining hand upon the instincts and the strivings of their nature.

Perkins's temper is an asthma to his mind; Wilkins's nervous sensitiveness a tie douloureux; Jones's eternal talk about himself is an obesity of consciousness that retards all the movements of his wit; fidgety Smith has St. Vitus's dance in the brain. A hermit's cell—perhaps the nutshell within which so many things are said to lie—would contain all the absolutely

sane men in the land. But if this be true, or if anything like this be true, what becomes of the broad line that is drawn between the man in the lunatic asylum and the man on 'Change? The law declares men lunatics when they are dangerous to society, or when they are incapable of managing their own affairs. One of these conditions lunatics share with the criminals, who are all persons of diseased mind, although not the less righteously punishable for their offences. To the other class how many of our friends belong! What rash speculation, indiscreet and unjust quarrels, stupid prejudices, and idiotic credulity cause men to bring their worldly state to ruin is not to be learnt only in the Bankruptcy Court.

We would not, of course, convert the gaol into a lunatic asylum. There can be nothing wholsomer than the determination to push human responsibility to the utmost. With the unsound bit in the mind, there is commonly more than enough of serviceable reason to control a pet excess within the bounds of common justice and morality. When, as happened lately, a soldier of marked eccentricity spends a night in cutting the throats of his wife and six children whom he loves, and prepares also to blow up the fort in which he is stationed, a just pity recognises the plea of insanity. But when, as also happened lately, a schoolmaster with a perverted sense of duty flogs a boy to death, though we may understand the twist of his mind, we condemn him to the uttermost. The law, in fact, admits already too often the plea of insanity, or unsoundness of mind, in bar of responsibility. The obvious rarity of a sound body, which is so much easier of acquisition than a sound mind, is enough to suggest to us how constantly and universally more or less unsoundness of mind must live subject to full responsibility. There is no line of demarcation between sane and insane, the healthy and the sickly hues of mind shade one into the other by the most imperceptible gradation of tint. But there is to be drawn somewhere an arbitrary line, and we believe the number to be very small of those whom such a line can safely or wisely put on the side of the irresponsible. Men with a tendency to go wrong in any particular direction, are not to be kept within bounds by removal of the common restraints of society.

When we accept fairly this doctrine, we get rid of one bar to the improvement of a dangerous class of sick minds, in the terror with which people still regard insanity. And yet insanity is but the Latin term for "want of health" of mind. This is a terror left from the old days of whips, chains, cells, and straw pallets. There is an extreme insanity of mind dependent upon well-marked bodily diseases altering the condition of the brain, with which the physician now knows how to deal. But minor differences in the health and constitution of the brain, to be recognised only by their effect on the workings of the intellect or temper, are innumerable. In their first arising, they are influenced by wholesome treatment, physical and mental, to a most

remarkable degree, and so it is that the first movements of the minds of children may be regulated to their life-long advantage, in a quiet, wisely ordered home. Prejudices, everybody knows, may be removed easily when they are but a few months old, hardly, or not at all, when of long standing. As of prejudices, so of all mental unsoundness. Of cases of insanity brought into the York Retreat, the recoveries were four to one from attacks not more than three months old, but only one in four from attacks older than a twelvemonth.

Until we have bridged over with a little better knowledge and some honest admissions the gulf now set between insanity and sanity of mind, the repugnance to whatever looks like an admission even of a possible insanity, will keep a vast number of diseased minds out of asylums during those earlier stages of infirmity in which they are to a considerable extent open to remedy. Moreover, as it was urged at the last meeting of the Social Science Association by one of the best practical authorities upon this topic, Mr. Samuel Gaskell, now Commissioner in Lunacy, most insufficient means of help are offered to the labouring and middle classes when attacked or threatened with disease of the mind. The law has already done much for the insane pauper, but in England and Wales for those who are not paupers, there is lamentable want of proper means of care and treatment. Mr. Gaskell believes that for the support of such asylums adequate funds could be derived from the patients, if the land and buildings were once furnished by the public, and there are few ways in which expenditure would lead to as much return of public good.

But Mr. Gaskell urges also that view of the case on which we are now more particularly dwelling, when he reminds us "that diseases of the mind, as well as diseases of the body, assume an infinite variety of forms, varying both in kind and intensity." He thinks it unwise that "the same certificates, orders, returns, restrictive regulations, and penalties are applicable to all patients, whether affected merely by the slightest aberration, or suffering from total loss of mental power and self-control.

"How marked a difference," he says, "is here observable in respect to bodily complaints, for which we have hospitals both general and special, dispensaries for milder cases, as well as convalescent and sea-side houses. And why, it may with good reason be asked, have we not asylums adapted to the slightest as well as the most severe form of disease?"

The particular suggestion made by Mr. Gaskell is for the legal sanctioning of a sort of asylum, in which, under wise medical supervision and with quiet oversight, care might be had of slight affections, or the slight beginnings of disease, that neglect only, or mismanagement, would cause to be severe. This should be a recognised asylum, lying outside the operation of the present lunacy laws, and use might be made of it as a sort of probationary house for insane patients, discharged as cured from asylums of

the present sort. In such a house assurance might be had that the discharged patients are reasonably safe against those relapses which are now perpetually bringing them to the bar of our courts for wild, distressing crimes. There are a thousand suicides among us every year, of which the greater number come of an uncontrollable diseased impulse.

There never will be room for all who require treatment. Perverse temper, wrong-headed action, undue distress over trifles, and almost uncontrollable impulses to do this or that wild thing, never can, to their full extent, be practically recognised as what they are. It is, on the whole, quite right and necessary to consider them as points of character to which a full responsibility attaches. We only urge, in aid of Mr. Gaskell's argument, a consideration that should soften very greatly our impression of the difference between soundness and unsoundness of mind. If houses of voluntary retirement, under any sense of infirmity or trial of mind, are to be established, let us have with them, we say, a fair sense of the fact that in variety and extent mental disorder is like bodily disorder, and that there is a wide range of mental as of bodily affection very far short of mutilation, nay, that there are whole pieces of mind that many a man contrives to do without, as he might do without an arm or an eye, or both his eyes. Let men feel that there is a common lot to them all in mental as in bodily affliction, and let nobody suppose that, although like people in hospital he also is liable to his headaches and sicknesses, his mind never feels any of the infirmity over which science and humanity keep watch in lunatic asylums. We must not only dismiss the strait-waistcoats and the chains, but also much of the old vague horror of insanity. In this, as in other matters, there is to be established a yet closer sense of fellowship among men than was recognised in the old days that are gone. Who knows? We may live to see a Committee of Physicians managing a Sulky Club, a Physician taking out his license for an Hotel of the Thousand Passions, and the best half of the town may spend its holiday under the doctor in a School for Scandal.

The extent of the old error is suggested by the phrase left to us for insanity, that it is a man's being "out of his mind," or "beside himself." He and his mind are, of course, not parted, but his mind is out of some part of its health, and, as was said at starting, I should like to know how many people in the world have absolutely healthy minds.

Again, however, let it be urged that this view of the general condition of men's brains contracts instead of extending the bounds within which pleas of insanity are justifiable in bar of criminal responsibility. No man would commit a wilful crime being right minded; and as long as a man is wrong minded he is best warned into self-restraint by certainty of penalty for hurt inflicted on his neighbours. Let the pleas of infirmity be met by the general persuasion that we are all more or less infirm, and let us abide by the wholesome maxim of law, that

every offender must be answerable for a crime of which he has sense enough to know that he committed it. To knock out a man's brains under the real belief that one is breaking a glass bottle, is, for example, the only kind of insanity that should protect homicide from punishment.

THE LAST NEW SAINT.

UNTIL an Englishman has resided for a while out of Great Britain, he does not appreciate how national an institution is his habit of assembling in public meeting. Whether he has a censure to pass, a vote of praise and thanks to express, a right to enforce, or an abuse to abolish, he commences his task by convening his compeers in public meeting. No Englishman, therefore, will blame the convocation of the public for the furtherance of interests, or the announcement of opinions, which may be supposed to be connected with the general welfare.

But there are two ways of undertaking an enterprise—a straightforward way, and a crooked way. With us, an object that is proposed to be obtained through the influence of general opinion, must be openly attacked boldly in the face, or it had better be left to repose in quiet. We make a regular siege on the obnoxious principles; we fire off our motions, our speeches, our resolutions, straight at the mark, instead of employing any of the stratagems of military tactics. We want to abolish the corn-laws, and we call a meeting for their abolition, in which the whole proceedings are consistently directed to that end, and to nothing else. We do not call a meeting avowedly for the abolition of the corn-laws, but indirectly for the abolition of the House of Lords. Our public meetings are eminently straightforward.

But we can imagine reunions of agitators which might be less frank and sincere in their character. Bodies of men will sometimes offer the concentrated expression of the character of the individuals of whom they are composed. If the leading members, singly, are men of tortuous and mole-like habits, it is possible that a meeting, while professing to point its muzzle to the right, will be really discharging its grape-shot to the left.

There has just closed (not in the Queen's dominions) a just manifestation, of which it is not harsh to say that it means more than it openly announces. It can hardly be called a public meeting, because there was no free discussion; in spirit, it was more like the parading of our operatives through the streets, six or eight abreast, in times of trouble or penury. Three-and-twenty archbishops and bishops, including a cardinal, assembled at Arras, to walk about the town in procession and make a grand display of reliques, vestments, trade guilds with images of their patron saints, and school children in fancy costume. The various approaches to the city were like the road to Epsom races; people on foot, people on donkeys; people, thirty and more, crammed into huge Flemish waggons; people in elegant private carriages; people in tumbrils used for manure, swept and garnished for the occasion; people by railway; people by canal.

The ostensible object was three days' religious fêtes to celebrate the transportation of the relics of the last new saint beatified at Rome, and thence brought to Arras by Monseigneur the Bishop Parisis. For three days the relics were exposed to public veneration on a splendid throne erected behind the high altar of the basilica. The cathedral, richly draped with crimson velvet, hung with flowers and green leaves, pealing with new music, filled with a struggling and inquisitive crowd, and with no ventilation except the open door, recalled the historical temperature of the famous Black Hole. Except to a favoured few around the prelate, the Archbishop of Rouen's sermon was rendered inaudible by the shuffling bustle of comers and goers, and the disputes between persons who hire chairs by the year, and those who only hire them by the day. The procession, especially, gave the old Spanish streets of Arras the aspect of an opera-house in which the manager is determined to ruin himself. It closed with the cortége of the Bienheureux and the said three-and-twenty bishops. As the Saint's mortal relics remained enthroned in the cathedral, and were not carried through the streets, he was represented by a group consisting of his own statue reposing on a cloud, surrounded by angels, and crowned by the Virgin, with the serpent smitten and precipitated in the direction of the bottomless pit.

And who is this last new saint? The reader shall hear.

The Bienheureux (the Blessed) Benoit Joseph Labre, the eldest of fifteen children, was born at Amettes, a village lying in the province of Artois, south of the town of Aire, and north of Arras, on the 26th of March, 1748, and died at Rome, in the odour of sanctity—by no means a figurative expression—on the 16th of April, 1783. The whole of his earthly biography was, therefore, completed before the outburst of the grand tempest of the first French revolution. Of his posthumous adventures, the most wonderful, up to the present date, took place on Sunday, the 15th of July, 1860, and the two following days.

The Blessed Benoit Labre's epoch is not so far removed from our own time, but that there remains in his native neighbourhood some tradition derived from personal reminiscences. Those are not flattering; verily, in his own country, he is no prophet for a multitude of scoffers though not heretics. By such profane persons he is spoken of as the prince of idle and filthy fellows; his name, Labre, is even purposely pronounced Ladre, meaning scabby, mangy, leprous. He came of an ultra-religious (perhaps we might say credulous and superstitious) family, several of whose members manifested their dreamy and fanatic tendencies by retirement into monasteries and nunneries. Jean-Baptiste, the Blessed Benoit's father, was the proprietor of eighty acres of land and a substantial house; all which, according to the then custom of the Boulonnais, would have gone to the eldest son. There were also very comforting expectations of inheritances from ecclesiastical uncles.

The blessed boy was unlike other children;

no play for him, but plenty of church. He was so fond of mass, that, when he came back from it, he set up a little toy-altar and repeated all the ceremonies before it. Whenever he was naughty, as the most blessed boys will sometimes be, he was set some little penitence, such as holding his arms in a cross, or other corporal mortification. The severest punishment would have been to make him learn his lessons. His Paters, and Aves, and genuflexions, and crossings, left no room in his brain for earthly knowledge. When house, and lands, and all were spent, dirt and ignorance were most excellent. In a vision, an angel whispered to him, "Multiplication is vexation, Division is as bad; the Rule of Three will puzzle thee, and Fractions drive thee mad." So he never crossed the ass's bridge; Latin was a stumbling-block; and he never set foot on the *Gradus ad Parnassum*. At all his attempts to enter the Roman Catholic priesthood—for which his uncles did their best to "cram" him—he was what flippanc Cantab's call "plucked," although the classical attainments then required were not those of an Oxford first-class man. Books of piety were all they could get him to read; prayer, penitence, and meditation, were all they could get him to do. Still he was a very good boy indeed; his conscience would not allow him to eat even the windfall fruit in his uncle's garden, and his humility was such that he obeyed his uncle's servants as if they were his superiors. Once, when his father sent him to lift some corn that was sprouting in the field in consequence of wet weather, he set about the task so stupidly as to get a parental scolding. To which he meekly replied, that he was not called to do the things of this world. When his uncle told him to work harder at Latin, or, at least, to set about doing *something*, he answered that he intended to enter a Trappist convent. As he was too pious to be a farmer, and too illiterate to be a parish priest, he consoled himself with the belief that his fit vocation was to be a friar. When his parents begged him, with tears and entreaties, to give up the idea of burying himself alive, he answered that his conscience would allow of no truce or delay; that he ought to obey God before any one else, and that he could not resist His will. So he went on his way rejoicing.

But the Trappists would not have him; he was too young, they said—not quite twenty, and small and weakly too. Their youngest member must be twenty-four. He then tried the Chartreuse de Longuenesse, near St. Omer. He was politely received; the mansion pleased him greatly; the regularity which reigned in that pious retreat increased his desire of being taken in. They could not oblige him, just then, because the monastery had received considerable injury from fire; they advised him to apply to the Chartreuse de Montreuil, where they promise to receive him, if he will first learn the elements of philosophy and church music.

Unreasonable Carthusians, to exact such se-

vere conditions from one destined to become a blessed servant of Heaven ! Whether he fulfilled them, is very doubtful ; but he got in, nevertheless—and soon got out again. The discipline was too gentle to his liking, the mortification was insufficient. The prior sent him back to his parents, accompanied by a servant of the convent, with his best compliments. La Trappe, tried again in spite of his parents' remonstrances, would have nothing to do with him : then at least, although they allowed him to stay a few days—perhaps to discover what sort of stuff he was made of.

His parents were delighted ; his mother urged him to prepare himself sufficiently for ecclesiastical orders, and sent him to visit his relations and uncles. But the *Abbaye de Sept-Fonts* ran in his mind. At night he used to get out of bed and sleep on the ground, to train himself for the noble profession which it was the will of Heaven that he should adopt.

He re-entered the *Chartreuse de Montreuil*, left it, and wrote a first letter to his parents :

" **MY VERY DEAR FATHER AND MY VERY DEAR MOTHER**,—I inform you that the Carthusians having judged me unfit for their profession, I left on the 2nd of October (1769). I regard that as an order of Divine Providence, calling me to a more perfect state. They told me it was the hand of God which took me away from them. I am, therefore, on the way to La Trappe, the place which I have so long and ardently desired. I beg your pardon for all my disobediences, and for all the sorrow which I have caused you ; I pray you both to give me your benediction, that the Lord may accompany me. . . . Have care of your salvation ; read and practise what Father l'Aveugle teaches ; it is a book which shows the way to heaven, and without doing what he says there is no salvation to be hoped for. Think of the frightful pains of hell, where people suffer a whole eternity for a single mortal sin which is so easily committed ; force yourselves to be of the small number of the elect. . . . Procure for my brothers and sisters the same education as you have given me ; without instruction it is impossible to be saved."

But La Trappe would not have him. So he took the habit, in the monastery of Sept-Fonts, or the Seven Fountains, and became Friar Urbain. In six months he left. The abbot gave his uncles to understand that the inexpressible sensibility of Benoit's conscience leaving them no hope of making him of any service to the establishment, they had not taken any steps to keep him there. He became a pilgrim by trade, and condescended to write a second and last letter to his parents, informing them that he was on his way to Rome, and giving them another dose of good advice.

He went to Loretto, to visit the Holy House which had flown through the air ; he went to the birthplace of the seraphic founder of the Franciscan order ; he went to the capital of the Christian world. Wherever he went, he made himself remarkable for his great compassion for souls in purgatory ; for his contempt for his own person—never mentioning it except in terms which, though not polite, still showed the little store he set by it ; and for a great love of his neigh-

bour. He prayed fervently for everybody, and he gave to the poor the greater part of the alms he received, only keeping what was necessary for his wretched daily maintenance, without thinking of the morrow. Benoit went to church early in the morning. He was clad like a veritable pauper. His habit was of ashy grey ; over it, he wore a very short cloak, a rosary round his neck, an old rope by way of girdle, a wooden cup on one side, and small bundle on the other. Till noon, he heard every mass with the greatest devotion, continually motionless, and with his hands joined : to the great edification of the persons present, who admired the modesty and piety of this good pauper, and who all, as they came out of church, said he was a saint. The sacristan stated that he never stirred out of the church ; after dinner, he was always found in the same position as in the morning, with his hands joined and his eyes fixed on the statue of St. James. In the evening, instead of leaving the church, he endeavoured to remain there all night, although he had taken no food all day. Such a remarkable penitent was far too valuable to be suffered to starve himself to death ; but when they obliged him to retire to an hospital hard by, he would never indulge in the luxury of a bed.

He made pilgrimages to Naples, Switzerland, and Germany, and then back again to Rome for the jubilee, all in the same fakir-like style of life ; but his favourite pilgrimage was to Loretto, whether he made an annual trip, although Rome was his permanent residence. Near the Coliseum is still to be seen an ancient wall almost completely in ruins. The blessed pilgrim found therein, a hollow big enough to hold a man and shelter him from the rain ; his choice was soon made, and for several years he had no other lodging. He there took a short night's rest, after spending the day in prayer, standing or kneeling, constantly fixed and motionless, in some of the churches, and after listening to the instruction given to the poor in the hospital which has just been mentioned. His health suffered ; he could ill be spared from the tableaux vivants of the Roman places of worship ; care was taken that he should sleep under a roof, but never was he known to undress himself to go to bed. From morning till noon he remained kneeling in prayer in some church, although occasionally he spent half the morning in one church, continuing until noon in another. He then went to receive a dole of soup at the door of some religious house. Thence, he went to some church where the Holy Sacrament was exposed for the forty hours' prayers, where he remained till night. In eating his soup and the morsel of bread that accompanied it, he first took the bowl in his two hands, held it over his head as if he were offering it up in sacrifice, and prayed for the space of five or six minutes completely absorbed in ecstasy.

At Loretto he first obtained the complimentary remark, "Either he is a madman or a saint." They wished to find him some shelter in a farm, but they dared not propose, even

to Loretta farm-servants, the company of so ragged and filthy a person as the blessed Benoît. The difficulty was overcome by lodging the pilgrim in the oven. Perhaps they thought that afterwards it would be more suitable for the baking of fancy bread. During his last three visits to Loreto he was accommodated with a fixed lodging by a married couple named Sori. They prepared for him an upper chamber with a bed; but he found the chamber much too comfortable, preferring one that was below the level of the street.

Signor Sori, perceiving that his diet consisted entirely of a few leaves of salad, bits of cabbage, and other offal, which he picked up in the town for his evening's repast, did not like to see him living so wretchedly, and offered him meat, fish, or a little good soup. But he always refused to taste it. "Those," he said, "are not paupers' dishes. I am a pauper, and I may not eat of them." On Easter-day only, and that for the great motive of obedience, he accepted a morsel of lamb and drank a little wine. Ordinarily, he would only take hard and dry bits of bread, such as no one else would eat. If they offered him a whole loaf, he declined to touch it, observing, "A loaf is not for paupers; paupers eat remnants." His hosts used to play him a charitable trick, for they more than suspected they were lodging a saint. They took a whole loaf and broke it into little pieces. The holy man, not gifted with clairvoyance, took them for remnants, and swallowed them without straining.

Signora Sori was a woman, and distantly related to Bluebeard's wife. Benoît changed his habits in one respect at Loreto; the bundle which elsewhere never left him was there deposited in his sleeping-room. For Signora Sori not to open and inspect it, was impossible. She found a few ragged shirts, a breviary, some religious books, and a tin box containing certificates of confession, and of having been a novice for several months at the monastery of the Seven Fountains. He also changed his habits in another way. His small-clothes being full of holes, the sacristan enabled him to substitute others that were less permeable to the winds of heaven. Clad and comforted with these, he turned his back on the Holy House, never to return to it.

The man of God (as his canonisers call him) absolutely refused everything that exceeded strict necessities. He would accept no regular alms or fixed allowance. When he had a choice of the three first of human wants—food, clothing, lodging—he invariably chose the worst. He courted contempt; he got himself to be regarded as the off-scouring of the earth; he purposely wore filthy and disgusting rags which inspired repugnance at his approach. He had no objection to pelting with stones, beard-pluckings, and blows. Somebody gave him an alms of two very small pieces of money, which he instantly handed over to another pauper. The Somebody, taking it as an affront to himself, gave him a blow with his stick, asking, "Did you expect I was going to give you a sequin?"

Patient Benoît walked on without saying a word. Through a sentiment of humility and extraordinary mortification, he took no measures to avoid the consequences of his perennial uncleanness, but endured that degrading form of torture during all the latter days of his life. The wooden bowl in which he received his soup at convent doors, was cracked in two, mended with rusty iron wire, broken on one side, and expressly untidy. He almost always came last to receive that soup, and occasionally had to go without it. One day, entering into the court of Monseigneur della Porta's palace, he saw on a dunghill, a lump of coagulated soup which the cook had thrown out. Benoît looked round in all directions, to see whether he were observed. Believing that no one was watching him, he went down on his knees on the dunghill and ate the remnant of sour soup, to the astonishment of the cook and butler, who were peeping at him through the window.

He was sparing of his speech; he would pass a month or more without uttering a syllable that was not absolutely necessary. He was diffident of his own opinion. A single word from persons who, in his eyes, held their authority from God, sufficed to vanquish any repugnance he might feel, and to lead him whithersoever they would. He was as submissive to the voice of his spiritual father—his director or confessor—as he had been firm and determined when his parents tried to dissuade him from the career to which he believed himself called by Divine inspiration. He considered himself a monster of ingratitude towards God, and a great sinner. He more than thought it; he said it with an intimate persuasion. He went so far as to find the greatest satisfaction in passing for a vagabond, a useless fellow, a hypocrite, an ignorant creature, a madman. He regarded the authors of such humiliations, as his brethren, and as instruments sent by the Divinity to purify his imperfections. During the continual journeys which he took through picturesque countries to remarkable sites, the peculiar spirit of his devotion would never allow him to enjoy the legitimate and innocent pleasure of examining the beauties, the edifices, the rarities, or the monuments. He spoke no more of his own country or of his parents and relations, than if he had no one on earth belonging to him.

Such are what his admirers and beatifiers call the Christian virtues of the last new saint!

He believed, with Saint Theresa, that imperfect confessions precipitate multitudes of Christians into the place not mentioned to ears polite. When he was nothing but a skeleton covered with skin, he still did his utmost to mortify his body. He fell a martyr to his asceticism. He died of weakness and exhaustion. In reward, are attributed to him not merely ordinary graces, but also those which Roman theologians call gratuitous; such as the discernment of spirits, the penetration of the secrets of hearts, the gift of miraculous cures, the spirit of prophecy, and others. He foresaw the honours that would be rendered to him after death.

Fainting on the steps of Our Lady of the Mountains, he was carried to the house of one Zaccarelli, a butcher, where he breathed his last. "The saint is dead! the saint is dead!" was shouted up and down the street, next day, all over the neighbourhood. The whole of Rome was agitated. Crowds came to Zaccarelli's house, demanding to see the body, and forcing an entrance. Zaccarelli resolved that the funeral should be magnificent, and took the expenses upon himself. The curés of two adjoining parishes, each anxious to secure the body for his own church, disputed in which of the parishes Zaccarelli's house stood. The relic market was clearly on the rise. The exposure of the body and the interment were the occasion of scenes of fanaticism which were only repressed by the presence of soldiers and by the closing of the church. The tomb was enclosed by a railing, around which a military guard had to remain two months, to prevent riot and scandal.

Scarcely was the holy man under ground, when his portrait was engraved; the prints were distributed before they were dry. Likenesses in all sorts of attitudes were sold by hundreds of thousands. Everything that had belonged to him, far and near, was importunedly sought for, and treasured as precious reliques. His rags, and everything attached to his personal uses, were torn and broken up, to be dispersed bit by bit. The wood and stone of the places where he used to pray, was scraped and grated; the spout of the fountain where he ordinarily quenched his thirst, disappeared. Pious enthusiasm felt no remorse at pious thefts. Labre was canonised by the voice of the people.

A number of miraculous cures followed his death—some two hundred miracles in all. We fail to appreciate them. One of the most remarkable was the conversion to the Roman faith of Mr. Thayer, an American, and a Protestant minister. A nun in the convent of Saint Apollonia broke a blood-vessel in her lungs, which so weakened her that she could take no nourishment. She invoked the venerable Labre, and drank, with faith, a liquor in which one of his reliques had been steeped. She was cured in an instant. That very day she joined the other nuns in the choir, and ate her dinner without any unpleasant consequences, as testified by the lady superior and six nuns of the same community.

In 1784, the then bishop of Boulogne-sur-Mer solicited the beatification of the holy pauper, as likely to afford an admirable spectacle for angels and men. The storms by which St. Peter's bark was subsequently assailed, postponed the scheme till 1807. Again interrupted by new vicissitudes, the cause was resumed in 1817; fresh miracles had fixed attention and excited confidence. But the matter remained in suspense until 1847, when it was resumed under the pontificate of his Holiness Pius the Ninth, now reigning. On Ascension Day, 1859, the Holy Father solemnly decreed the desired beatification; and on the 20th of May, 1860, the basilica of St. Peter was most

splendidly adorned, to celebrate the solemn fête of the humble pilgrim's canonisation. If candles could do it, the ceremony was effectual. More than five thousand wax tapers shed their light around; more than forty thousand persons were present. Benoit was one of the celestial hierarchy at last.

Poor Benoit, in the flesh, was a harmless creature; a little vain of his dirt, a little cunning in his devotion. But is he an example for general imitation? In the first place, if everybody were like him, the human race would speedily come to an end—and would richly deserve that consummation. Do we want any more new saints? If we did want them, should we want such dirty and do-nothing saints? A succession of saints like Benoit Labre, would raise the price of chloride of lime and sulphur ointment.

Monseigneur Parisis, who brought the saintly bones from Rome, and who got up the meeting and show at Arras, is the same prelate who vainly endeavoured to exclude Protestant children from French schools, under pain of excommunicating the Roman Catholic masters and mistresses who should receive them without working hard at their conversion. For that move, his grandeur got a gentle rebuke from the minister; but he cares so little for it, that he is ready to attack heresy in any form, and almost with any weapon.

At this moment there is a hard struggle between the French government and the Ultramontane priesthood. On the first proposal of the religious fêtes, authority forbade the procession to pass through the streets, believing it intended as a manifestation of sympathy and an ovation for Monseigneur Dupanloup, Bishop of Orleans and libeller of the dead. Monseigneur's absence being guaranteed, the out-door pageantry was reluctantly permitted. But the whole affair is less an apotheosis of a wretched ascetic than a menace—to this effect:

"Take care, you in high places, how you press too hard on the temporalities of the Pope. You see how we can assemble and rouse the people; our spiritual power is not yet paralysed. If with one dead saint we can rally around us the devout supporters of his Holiness,—with another, perhaps, we may send you to Jericho, and bring back our beloved Henry the Fifth."

SONNETS ON GODSENDS.

I.

STRAIGHT from the hand of God comes many a gift,
Fraught with healing and with consolation
For a world of toil and tribulation;
And yet from which we blindly shrink and shift,
As from a burden onerous to lift.
Work itself, hard, drudging occupation,
Comes in shape of blessed dispensation
To those who wisely can perceive the drift
Of such a boon to assuage the pangs of mind,
Sadness, suspense, anxiety, or worse,
Rrankle from wounding words and looks unkind,
The desolation of friends' eyes averse,
Nay, e'en the anguish of a recent loss,
Akin to that was felt beneath the Cross.

II.

Work is a Godsend most divine, direct :
The call to active duty, the stern need
For prompt alacrity and instant deed,
Teaches the soul its forces to collect,
Assists it still to raise itself erect
When beaten prostrate like the wind-blown reed
By stormy flaw ; it sows the fruitful seed
Of vigorous resolves, that will protect
And grow around fresh shoots of budding hope,
Preserving them from frost of chill despair,—
Will keep them free from canker-slough, with
scope
For spreads of tender leaflets, and prepare
The way for future blossoms that may twine
A garland for the brow no more supine.

III.

All the year round come Godsend's evermore,
Manifold and multiform, like wild flowers
In summer-time, when warmth and genial showers
Have made the lanes and meads a broider'd floor,
Rainbow-hued, bright, and deep-ingrained more
Than hall for dancers' footing, where the hours
Bring speedy blur: proudly the foxglove towers,
Behung with white or purple bells, a store
Of pyramidal beauty; faintly blush
Dwarf mallows, lilac, veined with soft threading;
Poppies, casting their vivid scarlet flush
Athwart the golden corn; umbel-spreading
Hemlock; meek-eyed violets, amid the rank
Tall rampant clamberers up hedge and bank.

IV.

Not more variety in wayside weeds
Than in the Godsend's lavishly bestow'd
On man, who takes them often like a load
Of worthless or unvalued waifs; and heeds
No jot their purpose, nor discerning reads
Their undevelop'd good; upon the road
He lets them lie, trod like the toad
Beneath his foot; and, thoughtless, on proceeds.
But, like the jewel in the reptile's head,
Or, like the wholesome virtues in the herb,
Latent, unnoticed, dullly left unread,
Cast by in carelessness, or mood acerb,
The gem-bright eyes unseen, the healthful juice
unsought,
The Godsend's sacred lesson still remains un-
taught.

V.

A stormy sky, with glimpse of promise fair;
A trial bravely borne; a sickness gone;
An unexpected sob from heart of stone;
A touch of magnanimity—too rare—
In one whose candour takes you unaware;
The luxury of weeping when alone,
What time volition lies all prone
After stout will has done its best to bear
The tension of composure hard-sustain'd
Before the eyes of others; a child's cry,
Where loud roaring ends in laughter gained;
A smile from sudden'd heart, you scarce know why:—
These sweets distill'd from bitterness of gall,
To my thought, are no less than Godsend's all.

VI.

An old expressive simple word is this
Of Godsend, just a something sent from God,
The fountain of all good: an almost odd,
And quaint directness,—like a given kiss;
Familiar holy, pure in granted bliss.
Free and off-hand, perhaps, as friendly nod;
But dear and cherish'd as the grassy sod.

That lies above the head we daily miss
From out our life, making that life a kind
Of death. As special graces, treasure Godsend's!
Oh, let us grateful-hearted bear in mind
The more inobvious, as the clearer ends
For which they are vouchsaf'd to those on whom
They fall, like stars, to brighten night and gloom.

THE SYSTEM JONES.

A GREATER man than Soyer is no more. Mr. Hyacinth Jones died suddenly at his villa near London, in the sixtieth year of his age. He was a great benefactor to London society, yet he may be said to have died almost unknown by the gay and thoughtless and light-hearted, who eat and drink and dance through the butterfly months of this vast Babylon; but he was well known to those who wear the "iron crown" of housekeeping. It was by his wonderful efforts alone that the master and mistress of the house were enabled to sit without aching brows at their own dinner-tables; nay, positively to enjoy the gastronomic triumphs of the repast.

Hyacinth Jones's place of business was situated in one of the offshoot streets of Bond-street—a small private house. You knocked at the door, a respectable waiter-like person gave you admittance. No repulsive steam of dinners offended the nose; you were at once ushered into a well-furnished room. A faint, disagreeable smell was observable. This arose from a mass of newly-printed books, pamphlets, blue-books, reviews, journals, magazines, British and foreign, which were arranged in order on mahogany ledges against the walls. At one glance round that room you beheld the sum total of the world's latest intellectual efforts, damp and steaming from the press. Then there were auctioneers' catalogues of all recent sales of interest—rare books, old wine, pictures, china, coins, old furniture, and the thousand other curious objects of taste which circulate through rich society. Above the ledges were shelves filled with valuable books of reference on every conceivable subject—history, natural science, politics, theology, sport, &c. &c.

"And who read all this mass of print? Hyacinth Jones?"

"You doubt, madam? Remember the catalogue of books Mr. Buckle has read."

"But what has all this to do with dinners?"

"In a little while, you shall know, madam."

Some folks affirm that a partisan ought not to be a biographer. But, behold my dilemma! I am a partisan, yet, as Hyacinth Jones was far more unreserved with me than with any other person living, I alone possess the materials necessary to sketch his life. He was, in truth, remarkably secretive, rivalling the present Napoleon in that quality; but, with regard to the outer man, and particularly in the character of his face, he always reminded me of the portraits of the greater Emperor. I did not make Mr. Jones's acquaintance until middle age had destroyed the fineness of his features, rendering them full and puffy; but even then his

eyes possessed great force. In earlier years, the poetic period before he had eaten many dinners and begun to philosophise, his eyes must have been dominant over all his features, like the deep eyes of young Napoleon, as you see him in that French picture riding on the dromedary in the shadow of the pyramid.

There is an aphorism attributed to the Emperor Napoleon which was always in the mind of Mr. Jones: "Men are governed by their stomachs." He acknowledged the truth of this assertion up to a certain point. "Eating," he would affirm, "is a condition of our nature, the very basis of our well-being and happiness, but not the *summum bonum* of our lives. Its limitations are too contracted to satisfy the boundless aspirations of the soul. I challenge," said he, "the greatest gastronomists to deny this. Their science affords them certain cardinal principles, distinctive flavours recognised by the palate, to deal with. They have the power of treating certain constituents in a pure form, which group themselves under specific heads; thus, savoury, sweet, acid, hot, cold, &c.; these are subject to all the modifying conditions of consistence, proportion, and quality. Upon this elemental basis rises the highest art of cookery, the mixed form, the blending by certain laws of these distinctive flavours, producing as the result an harmonious union, or a totally new flavour. This has been not inaptly termed the 'thorough bass' of cookery. Undoubtedly, the mathematician could show you the possibility of varying these blendings ad infinitum, just as the musician can vary sound; but the palate, far inferior in its sensitiveness, to the ear, cannot appreciate these delicate distinctions: after a certain period the originality of cookery is exhausted."

I well remember the evening when he defined these limitations of cookery. Like all great men, he loved to be sometimes alone. I had broken in suddenly upon his reverie. I saw there were tears in his eyes.

"Papa Jones," said I—that was my familiar mode of addressing him—"why do you weep?"

"Behold, my son!" and he pointed to the table.

There was a singed moth close to the foot of the candlestick. I knew what he meant; his sympathy was with the symbolic idea, not with the individual insect.

"It has ceased to affect me, the moral of singed moths and skylarks," I replied. "Poets and philosophers have worked the subject threadbare."

"The moral is true for all that," said Papa Jones, mournfully. "Ah me!" he continued, with a sigh, "why wasn't I content with that?" And he drew from his waistcoat a white cotton cap, which he had evidently hidden away when I entered the room, and placed it on the table.

"Is it possible?" I exclaimed.

Then, in a sudden burst of confidence, he answered: "I began my life in the kitchen; my father, my grandfather, were great cooks. The talk of greatness which fired my young ears

was the greatness of cookery. I was governed by the ideas which surrounded me. I should have certainly seized with as great enthusiasm upon the aesthetic principles of poetry, sculpture, or painting, had either of those arts been the object of our lives, as I did of cookery. As soon as I was old enough I was placed under the care of the great chef Jerichau. I was his pet pupil—I was so easy to teach, so enthusiastic. I would sit alone for hours in my room over the creation of an entrée. At these times I have almost fainted for want of food; all I had to do was to keep my mind perfectly blank, and sooner or later the idea would flash upon me, and then I hurried into the kitchen to embody it in all its freshness and spontaneous force. My master was astounded by the originality of my creations. I was so young—I was all feeling, inspiration—not one atom of reflection to mar the force of my conceptions. Oh, splendid power of youth! without reflection, therefore without doubt—faith illimitable!"

Mr. Jones saw an involuntary smile on my countenance.

"Ah," said he, "it's almost impossible for you to comprehend my feeling for cookery. What do you understand by the term 'beautiful'? For my part, I consider it to be a latent sense of harmony in the soul, which is capable of being excited by numberless methods, many paths to a common goal—whether music, by appealing to that sense through subordination to its own laws of harmony—or painting, by submission to the laws of colour and outline—or science, by revealing to us the harmony of the laws of nature. I need not multiply instances. If my theory is correct, it enables us to dispense with a vast amount of the pity with which we regard certain avocations of man. That chamber of the parchment-visaged lawyer becomes a shrine of 'the beautiful'—the perfect logic of a fine argument; dry and wearisome to the natural man, is an inlet to the learned counsel's sense of harmony—the law books in calf hold the laureates of equity. In like manner, to the mathematician, are the laws of numbers and proportion.

"I don't doubt for a moment" (pursued Mr. Jones) "but that Lord Eldon and Sir R. Bethell minister to some men's sense of 'the beautiful,' just as Raphael and Titian do to others—that Babbage's calculating machine may produce exactly the same *inward* effect as a symphony of Mozart.

"Cookery had this effect upon me, I felt 'the beautiful' in the harmony of its laws. But after all, ambition formed the basis of my efforts. Those words of Napoleon sounded in my ears like an unconscious prophecy which was yet to be fulfilled: 'Mankind' are governed by their stomachs.' I aspired to give a power and influence to cookery of which the world had never dreamt of.

"My master possessed the highest talent and the most generous spirit. In a very short time he declared that I had learnt all that he could teach—that a European fame awaited me.

One day I submitted to him the rough notes of a new entrée hastily jotted down on the inspiration of the moment. With the high power of the great artiste he could realise the full flavour of a dish from the receipt, just as the great musician, by merely reading the score, can realise the full significance and harmony of the music with all its light and shade. Generally Jerichau was demonstrative in his admiration, but he perused my MS. in silence. As I watched his countenance, I could perceive the inward struggle which was taking place. Tears rolled down his cheeks. The marmitons, moved by unconscious sympathy with their master, had left their occupations to gather round him. He strove to address me, but was unable to utter a word. He drew this very cotton cap off his head and placed it on mine, and then, pressing his lips to my forehead, he left the kitchen."

"Papa Jones," said I, "I can realise the situation; it was the general tearing the cross off his own breast to place it on the breast of the heroic soldier."

"No, my son," he replied, "it was far grander than that. It was the formal act of abdication. I have searched history in vain for a more magnanimous deed. Charles the Fifth was gouty and worn out when he gave the crown to Philip; Jerichau was in the full vigour of his life and the full tide of his reputation."

"It was a magnificent triumph!" I exclaimed.

"It was," he answered; "but I only regarded it as a means to my great end—the power of influencing mankind. I know my comrades were perplexed by my showing so little elation; such insensibility in an artiste was incomprehensible; but I hid my aspirations in my own bosom."

He paused awhile in his narrative, and seemed buried in thought.

"Ah, me!" he exclaimed, breaking from his reverie, "that was the beautiful period of my existence; life carpeted with rose-leaves; intuition and faith which vanquished every difficulty without a struggle, and achieved every object without the curse of labour. And yet I know my faculties were but half developed; I had never reasoned, because I had never doubted.

"One day I grew dissatisfied with my efforts. My work appeared to grow less and less original. I was forced to *reflect*, and, to my dismay, I found for a long period that I had been only working in a circle. Do what I would, I could never advance beyond a certain point. Could it be possible that I had already arrived at the boundaries of my art? I strove and strove, as a bird beats against the bars of its cage, but it was all in vain.

"Slowly and painfully, I reasoned out the limitations of that organ of sense, the palate, through which I sought to address the soul. In my exultation at the unbounded possibilities numerically of combining flavours, I had entirely overlooked the rigid limits of the capacity of taste. I shall never forget the utter bitterness of heart with which I struggled to this conviction, and beheld the fallacy of my hopes. In the early days, there used to be such thrilling

brilliancy in the bright rows of copper stewpans, and now the gleam was horrible to my eyes. Day by day my powers left me; my hand, which had been as light as the most delicate woman's, but nerved with steel, grew as heavy as lead. I became far less capable than the lowest marmiton, against whose crass stupidity my master, in the grief of his soul, used to protest by perpetual oaths. They tried in vain to account for this change. Was it my bodily health? The doctor declared I was perfectly well. Was it love? The doctor shrugged his shoulders and smiled, in default of a better answer. They could never comprehend my case. Neither my father, nor my uncles, nor Jerichau, and they held many anxious consultations on the subject.

"I said that I had exhausted cookery.

"'Think of the splendid engagements your genius will command,' exclaimed my father, overcome by sorrow no less than anger.

"'The mouth of Europe watering for your efforts!' cried Jerichau, with poetic energy.

"'What is cookery?' I asked.

"'The science of feeding the world,' they answered.

"If that was their definition of cookery, it was impossible that they could ever understand the grandeur of my aspirations, so I held my peace and wept."

"And then, Papa Jones?" said I to him, gently, for he was quite overcome by his narrative.

"Through the greatness of the idea I rose; through the greatness of the idea I fell. The moral, my son, of singed moths and exhausted skylarks." In the agitation of the moment, he wiped his eyes with the cotton cap.

Up to the time of this confession, I had been completely puzzled how it came to pass that Mr. Jones was continually making use of that aforesaid expression of the Emperor Napoleon, but at the same time urging the fallacy contained in it, and asserting the dominant influence of intellect. I then perceived that he acted on the principle of a zealous convert, whose old dogmas might be perpetually in his mouth for the purpose of denying their truth.

To describe the "system Jones"—Thousands had felt the inadequacy of gastronomic science to satisfy the soul of man, but Hyacinth Jones had felt it with an intensity which led him to seek and discover a remedy. Thousands had sat, as guests, bored and gloomy over the most artistic cookery, and had experienced a dismal vengeance, as hosts, by beholding their friends bored and gloomy in return, till at length the thought of a dinner party was associated with a dulness *felt* like the darkness in Egypt, falling, like the catastrophe of the Dunciad, with a pall on the spirits. Now many people of superficial mind believed that this miserable condition was induced by some latent error in the science of cookery itself, and consequently sought a remedy by extraordinary culinary efforts, ignorant that the capabilities of the art were stretched to their utmost verge. Some persons gifted with clearer perceptions managed to hit the true source of the evil, and

endeavoured to get professed "diners out" to enliven the tedium of the table. But the practical success of the truest principle depends upon its being worked on a sound system. At times the "diner out" was not up to the mark, or he was sulky and silent owing to the presence of a rival, or his position at the table prevented him from talking with effect, and finally all minor matters being favourable, it frequently happened that his mental bias was not in unison with that of the company generally. Nevertheless, a belief in the necessity of *mind* at the dinner-table was the chief point to be gained. It was the glory of Mr. Jones that he created a systematic association of intellect with gastronomic enjoyment.

O reader! dwell awhile on the comprehensiveness of the "system Jones." Recollect that dinner is the law of civilised humanity. *Cenandum est omnibus!* politicians and poets, men of science, men of art, men of sport, transcendentalists, materialists, stout-bodied theologians, and slim damsels with golden hair and violet eyes—all, all are the slaves of that law. It was necessary that Mr. Jones should be in rapport with the whole circle of human interest, from the merit of the last *prima donna* and the crinoline question, up to the profoundest questions of philosophy, and the combat of Sayers and Heenan.

The "system Jones" was carried on in the following method. I will suppose that you have asked your friends to dinner, and received their reply, taking care always to leave one or two vacant places at the table, and that you have finally decided on the menu with your chef. You then called by appointment on Mr. Jones, and gave him a list of your guests, with the best description in your power of their mental bias and taste, and also a copy of the menu. After making careful notes and asking a few definite questions, Mr. Jones bade you good morning, taking a preliminary fee of a guinea. On the evening of each day Mr. Jones carefully read over his notes and settled in his mind the topics of conversation, and the method of treatment which would be most interesting to your guests generally. I need scarcely say that this was a most difficult operation. For instance, given an evangelical Dean hot on revivals, and an enthusiastic fox-hunter, to find the bond of common interest between the two; and yet so great was the sympathetic power of Mr. Jones, that he was enabled to devise a line of conversation equally interesting to the parson and the sportsman. If this were wonderful in the case of two persons of opposite tastes, how much more wonderful the power he possessed of arranging a conversation which was capable of engaging the sympathy of perhaps half a dozen persons of distinct pursuits and inclinations? Of course this was very difficult to effect: the result often of hours of laborious thought. The charge for a dinner of this kind was far higher than for one in which the guests had been asked with some regard to community of sentiment; still, if you chose to pay for it, you might with

safety ask your friends pell-mell, and rest with happy confidence in the success of your dinner.

The menu was an object of importance as a secondary point in Mr. Jones's calculations. His early studies with regard to the palate, as an inlet of consciousness to the mind, were by no means valueless to him, now that they were divested of youthful extravagance. The current of conversation was set in responsive harmony with the character of each plat, in the way that the mere gastronomist associates certain wines with certain dishes. So with a piquante sauce there was a stronger dash of irony and persiflage, a more serious tone with a brown sauce than a white sauce, lightest and most brilliant fancy with the soufflé, deepest tones of all with the rôti.

Mr. Jones's final arrangements with regard to the conversation were noted into book under the date of your dinner party. It will be obvious, with such nicety of arrangement, that if one of the guests failed at the last, he or she could only be replaced by a person whose tastes and sentiments were in accordance with those of some of the original guests, because the introduction of an entirely new mental element would have destroyed the plan of the conversation. A few days after your interview with Mr. Jones, you received a note giving the names of the two professional conversationalists who would attend your dinner; the places that they ought, if possible, to occupy at the table so as to give them the power of talking with due effect. Many people objected to giving up two chairs, but on this point Mr. Jones was very emphatic—it was his maxim that the conversation must *flow*, that there must be no abrupt jumping at points. Unless the topic was opened by a second person it was impossible for the "talker" to make his points with apparent spontaneity. Mr. Jones affirmed that he had frequently known some of the most perfect stories and bons mots fall utterly lifeless because the narrator had been obliged to *force* them without a natural introduction; he would never guarantee the success of a dinner unless he was allowed to send a "leader," as he was technically termed, to open the line of conversation for his co-adjudicator. The two conversationalists duly arrived at the hour appointed for dinner, but never in one another's company,—they were ushered into the drawing-room, and received with the same courtesy as the real guests—the whole charm would have been broken had their professional character been for a moment suspected. With regard to those heavy, sullen minutes before dinner is announced, Mr. Jones confessed his inability to afford any relief; indeed, he held that all conversation at that period was an utter waste of power, as the human mind, like the caged tiger prior to feeding-time, was in too disquieted a condition to receive any impression with effect.

Perhaps the most extraordinary circumstance connected with the "system Jones" was the fact that very frequently the professional talkers ap-

peared to be the most silent people at the table. The acute observer alone could perceive that it was through the most exquisite skill, by a few words thrown here and there, that the special sympathy of each guest was evoked, and the current of each individual mind set flowing towards a common centre of interest. The whole table was alive with conversation, bons mots breaking out here and there with dazzling effect, yet all in their due order, not boldly thrust in without a contest, but, as it were, brilliant emanations thrown off in the natural course of the conversation. The perfect concealment of all artifice and effort was a thing to be wondered at: in all probability each of those bons mots with its introduction had cost hours of laboured preparation.

Some people, indeed, because they only beheld the result, and not the method, affected to disbelieve in Mr. Jones's greatness. Oftentimes, in sheer vexation of spirit, I have been tempted, when I have seen people assembled in drawing-rooms with their long hungry faces, to proclaim the greatness of Mr. Jones, and say to them: "You come here for enjoyment, and you get it, thanks to Mr. Jones. O hungry man of science! Mr. Jones has been up half the night working at chemistry, that he may obtain some new idea, the germ of which, cast before you, is to unlock your tongue. O hungry physiologist! Mr. Jones has been at work for your sake on some new principles deduced from the book of Darwin. O hungry politician! Mr. Jones has constructed for you a wonderful canard evolved from plausible political possibilities. O golden-haired, but yet hungry heroine of a thousand *deux-temps*! Mr. Jones has been mindful of you. Of you too, O devotee of old china and old masters! And he has wrought, moreover, your antagonistic ideas into an harmonious whole, as Meyerbeer deals with the triple chorus in the *Etoile du Nord*.

"O Papa Jones!" I have exclaimed many a time, "why not be a great chemist or a great philologist, or anything else great you like? The choice rests with yourself; stand before the world as the Philosopher Jones."

"Que voulez-vous, my son?"—and he would lay his hand solemnly on his banker's book—"am I a boy that I should prefer a little *κύδος* to solid pudding? What emolument should I make as a philosopher? In this land we stoned the prophets—genius sows, and men of capital reap. I have made intellect a source of amusement, and therefore I am a reaper. I have done some little good in my generation: I have found men of good breeding and education, hungry and without employment; I have opened to these men a nourishing course of dinners, and an honest way of industry."

I shall fitly close this narrative by describing the grand triumph of the "system Jones." One of Mr. Jones's patrons had in a rather depreciatory manner asserted, "that after all the cook was the keystone of a dinner."

"I'll carry you through the worst dinner ever cooked!" replied Mr. Jones, with quiet confidence; "no one shall be able to say whether the dishes are good or bad."

I confess, even with my strong faith, I trembled for the result. The list of the guests was duly furnished to Mr. Jones. For one entire week, he saw nobody; for two whole days he was engaged in instructing his most trusty conversationalists. He himself attended in the dining-room dressed as a waiter; for, lest there should be any failure, he had elaborated three complete lines of conversation, and with one wave of his hand, had he found any flagging, a new line could have been taken up.

The dinner was truly execrable. It was conceived in the highest principles of French art; the preparations were conducted, up to within an hour of dinner, by an eminent chef; and then the whole was left to "a good plain cook."

The host apologised to his guests—the chef had been suddenly taken ill. Apology was needless, the triumph was with Jones: no one could find a moment for gastronomic criticism, so entirely absorbing was the conversation. When the gentlemen left the table, Mr. Jones fainted in the arms of a tall footman, his intellectual excitement had been so intense. I saw him soon after his return from this dinner. He was seated in his easy-chair; a glass of eau sucree stood before him; he was moulding a flake of his favourite "caporal" into a cigarette. He appeared perfectly calm, but the flush of strong mental effort was visible in his countenance. "Intellect," said he, with a placid smile, "has triumphed. After this dinner, my son, I shall die happy."

A ROMAN BURGHER.

It is a sad pity that Menenius left no heirs male of his body, or even heirs general. I doubt very much if there be a Menenius left within the length and breadth of this city of Rome.

Shall we go and look for him up at that fan of streets which branches off from bright Spanish Place, where is the English settlement, and where our Brother Briton lounges it in his Angola checks and stripes and familiar shapes of hat, and flutters in and out of the dazzling bazaars opened here for his special behoof; where, too, he lights his modestly priced cigar, whose cost fluctuates between economy and luxury—two farthings for the fair average run, two farthings and a half for zigarretschelti, or the choicer and selected stimulants.

Here, sitting in his bazaar, and battenning on Signor Giovanni Torro from England, surrounded with glittering wares, with jewellery, mosaic tables, photographs of public places, gaudy scarfs, and succulent confectionary—for these are the staples for which our traveller will barter with the natives—we shall find Signor Menenio, burgher, bourgeois, plain shopman in fact. He is an unit of the middle order; being a little contemptuously included in a class composed of all that is not sacerdotal, aristocratic, official, or eleemosynary. I find him, like many other burghers of many other cities, fair, rotund, and lined, if not with good capon, at least with those richer dainties with which his city abounds.

His opinions he takes out of his till, his political economy is hazily associated with the English customer, and he believes generally in the bank.

As to political convictions, he is a sad tergiversator, and plays Bifrons Janus, the old god of his city, to a melancholy degree. One—a notable curiosity-monger, with the most astounding likeness to that accomplished artist, Signor Tagliafico—will chatter whole newspaper columns as you turn over his rococo wares. My friend W—, who is ecclesiastically Conservative and staunchest Ultra Mountaineer, often falls to a delving among these treasures, while Signor Tagliafico's double maunders out good Tory port wine sentiments, breathing intensest devotion to Church and State: "These are days of civil dudgeon, critical days," chants the Tagliafico's double. "Such as are not with us, are against us. The Lord is chastening the Santo Padre for his own ends, for is it not well known whom He loveth he chasteneth? Good men are timorous and weak; did they but know their own strength and hold together, they need not fear any of these brigands." But return another day when your face has passed from his memory, and, disguising yourself in a liberal capote, talk loudly concerning annexations, and "il Rè galantuomo," and of Cavour the Bespectacled, and our Tory Tagliafico becomes obsequiously Republican; mutters gutturally the word, "Preti," conveys depreciation of the Government of the Keys, annexation to the new kingdom, general subversion of things that be, in one meaning shrug; would go into details, but that he looks over his shoulder at spectral sbirro or police agent. Still the noble stranger will understand that he is for liberty and liberal ideas all the world over. He would now show the signor one of the most exquisite little ivory carvings, found only the other day in the Casa Bella—and so forth.

Still it must not be concealed that this year the noble Englishman has fallen into disfavour. The glorious British Constitution is taken to be on its trial, and the decadence of Albion the perfidious to have at last set in, because her children have been slack in flocking to the city called Eternal. The costly golden wares of Conductor-street are unsold; the yellow Etruscan necklaces lie in the windows of Achille Rey, glittering unprofitably. The monster photographs of the corroded pillars of the Forum are hung out idly, or fade away in stock. The scarf's gaudy, yet not glaring, refreshing the eye with their Eastern eccentricity, have their flashing colours dulled, all because the timorous Britisher has stayed at home panic-stricken, like a perfidious Albionite as he is. Burgher's judgment has been deceived, he has been taken in. How different was it with you, O Tagliafico! during that last year of grace, that perfect jubilee of 'fifty-nine, when the Saxon, demented almost, came crowding tumultuously in—was it thirty thousand of these Norsemen?—and flooded hostels and lodgings to overflow, accepting even garret accommodation with gratitudo! Then flourished the English "Cercle," or "Clob," choked with members; then came

Lord Tom Salamander, with his brethren by the score. Then the noble Englishman brought his carriages and horses, and his four hunters, with Bowles, his English groom. Then spotless Christina, ex-queen, held revels, masked balls, and what not, where motley was the only wear. Then was the fox imported, and astonished peasants of the Campagna held up their hands with amazement as the scarlet rout swept by them. "Gran Dio!" the question is reported to have been, "whom do they fear; whom fly from?" with utter contempt and disbelief when it was expounded that these flying men in scarlet, whipping and spurring with such fury over the field in such force and numbers, were pursuing with fierce animosity the little unsavoury brown four-footed thing which flew past panting but a few seconds before. Those Campagna folk are wondering to this hour—explain it as you will, they cannot comprehend—and some have sagaciously set it down as a religious rite of the English heretics. The yellow jewellery was sold abundantly to the unbeliever; and the tabernacle of Achille Rey was entered burglariously and most ingeniously from below the shop shutter, and every Etruscan and Byzantine ornament swept away, without a trace having ever been discovered of the thief. Still the harvest poured in so plentifully that the loss fell upon him lightly.

But this present year it is all changed—from Pandemonium to a desert—from abundance to the abomination of desolation. One thousand Saxons instead of thirty, make but a poor show. No winters, no balls, no riot, no unsotted Christina. In Ossianic language, Desolate is the dwelling of Morna; lonely thy halls, O "Clob!" There is no strength in thy spear, Restorer Spillman; thy business must be, to all appearance, slack. You should have come in thy beauty, Bull, Son of the Morning. You should have come—for fallen, fallen is the price of lodgings. Can I not name a lady, now enjoying a second piano (not a semi-grand instrument, but a second story), with drawing-room, parlour, and some half a dozen rooms, for the ridiculous figure of twenty-four pennies per day! And the notice of stolen jewellery, a few lines up, brings to my mind what I have seen posted up in the Italian tongue at the corner of Spanish Place, touching some lost trinkets, rendered also into English, for the benefit of the ignorant of that nation. "Lost," says the little notice, "between the Piale's Library and the Corso, a small Cox, containing Jewellers! Any one bringing," &c. Such, as Mr. Ruskin says, "are very precious," and we would not willingly let them die.

Returning to Burgher Tagliafico, and keeping still within the venerated middle order or Mezzo Ceto, I find that the whole wealth of the city is centred in this order. They are very rich, and do not hoard their gains. It is not the most noble noble duca or princesse who buys, but simple, despised Mezzo Ceto. And now I discover the secret of that shabby dressing of those fine ladies—it is Mezzo Ceto who is the milliner's best customer, and recklessly purchases all her

showiest Paris goods, richest silks, and costliest laces. He loves to see Madame and Mademoiselle Mezzo Ceto well dressed, and grudges them nothing. And if we look in at San Andrea's or San Gregorio's, the Gesu, or other chapel, at the messe musquée, or scented and fashionable mass—so a lively prelate once put it—when the organ is at those curious pranks of his, jingling bells by machinery, we shall see these ladies flashing in superb raiment that positively dazzles. Burgher Tagliafico is ambitious, too; and with needy ducas and princesses hovering in their own aerial realms, ready to swoop where they see a fair dowry, there is a possible chance of a young daughter of the people being drafted over the border into the grand order of nobility. Still it is surprising that these burgher maidens should boast attractions sufficient to overbear the inert momentum of caste; for at that Sunday worship you will assuredly see no Canova angel, or crinolined Venus de Medici, prostrate over their straw-seated chairs. Note, too, that tendency to contracted shoulders and high drawn up neck, from which no draped shawl can be made by any art to slope away with pyramidal descent. The root of which anatomical deformity lies in that semi-barbarous fashion of teaching tiny Mezzo Ceto to walk, suspending him with an endless belt under his little armpits. So is the young idea educated into toddling, and the young succulent shoulders are swung into an unsightly contraction. So do the Roman matrons of a lower order still swaddle their infants in tight compact parcels, and lay them fearlessly on a wall, or the outer edge of a fountain, as they would a stone or block of wood: then set their arms akimbo, and hold sweet gossip with Roman Gaffer Gray. Some young ladies of the Mezzo Ceto, who succeed in living down the swathing process and the swinging belt, are ticketed at fabulous dowries. I could direct you at this moment to an obscure cabaret—say pothouse—lying in a slum, worth, upon the city valuation, if there be such a return, a bare ten pounds yearly, where you shall find a pearl of estimable price, with ten thousand scudi and more to her fortune. And this nuptial fusion of high and low caste sets me thinking of a little picture from the life.

One Sunday morning I wander into the church of San Marcello, which beards that huge waste of Palace called Doris Pamphilii. Friend C—, cheeriest and most jocund of the sons of men, has led me thither, whispering me with mystery, "You shall see what you shall see!" And so I kneel on a wicket-chair, but a few paces from the plain slab which covers over the gentle Gonsalvi, with many men and women picturesquely prostrate about me. I grieve to say I think more of one Roberts, R.A., and Luigi Haghé, who would have dealt magnificently with these kneeling worshippers, and strewn them effectively over a choice cathedral piece, than of holier and more becoming subjects. Services, too, proceeding contemporaneously at the high altar in front, at the smaller

altar directly on my right, at the altar directly on my left, at remoter altars rather behind me well down the church, help to make it a matter of much nicety and embarrassment how to deport myself with due reverence to each contemporaneous service. Thus, turning my face to Mecca, or to the high altar, I am clearly wanting in respect of a remote altar, having my back towards that ritual. Striving to adapt myself to a position which would look all ways at once, and in which the reverse of the human figure would be turned to no special direction, the result is, that I find myself looking a prostrate lady steadily in the face who is following a far-off service directly over my shoulder. Thus failing in this well-meaning attempt at trimming, as all trimming attempts usually do fail, I at length think—with surprise, too, at its being so long unthought of—of the business that has brought me there. Presently, the services being done, C— draws near, and touching me mysteriously, whispers hoarsely, and simply points. Points whitherward? My eye runs along his extended finger, and reaches a portly pair kneeling just by, who have a general air of licensed victualling. The finger encourages me, and, knowing that I burn, I measure the fair closely, and see that the licensed victualler is burly and compressed, and gathers up his wife's prayer-books with much humility. Licensed victualler's wife I find to be a great frouzy wench, with a mottled face, inflamed (perhaps with licensed victualling), and a variegated shawl, richly dressed in flaming silks, with a bright yellow bonnet.

Trooping out presently in the flux of population, C— takes me by the arm with "esfumion," and says,

"Did you see? Tolla!"

I start—"Tolla? What, the licensed victualler's wife? Impossible!"

"But it is so. That was Monsieur and Madame Savarelli, father and mother of Tolla—of poor, unhappy, betrayed Tolla!"

If there be a sweet tale in this world, or one which, by its natural tenderness and clear unaffected simplicity, makes us for a moment think of a story of a certain dear clergyman who was some time incumbent of Wakefield, it is this true history of trusting Tolla. I think how strange it is that such a legend should have come from a cynic's lips, unbroken by a sneer—and from one who, in his small way, is a professed mimic of the great Voltaire.

Do we not most of us know that touching legend? It is no new thing that M. About should bring on his little stage a false and noble Lelio, who wins the heart of an humble maid of a rank far below him. Not unnatural, too, that the princely family should set themselves against this unequal alliance; nor is it startling to the conventional morality of the world that they should send out the noble youth upon his travels, furnished with a sort of devilish Mentor, smooth and artful, who, by adroit distraction, shall gradually fill his mind with other thoughts. Gradually the letters grow slack—perhaps are

intercepted, according to the old code of villany in such cases made and provided. Hope deferred, suspense, neglect, and finally desertion and utter blank for the gentle Tolla. Then is superadded ingenious web of invention: rumours of marriage for the noble youth, with, finally, this miserable but hoped-for result—breaking of heart and death for poor Tolla. Just then have the scales fallen from Lelio's eyes—for, though he is weak, he is well intentioned. He discovers the base intrigue, posts home, and reaches the city just in time to meet a funeral. This is M. Abou's legend, founded on the precise facts. The bourgeois family to which Tolla belonged, called Savarelli, published all the letters relating to this sad business, appealing to the public of Italy for justice. They created a perfect storm of prejudice against the noble family.

The noble Lothario, or deceiver, as is well known, had all his palatial windows shivered by a virtuous mob. For years he durst not return with safety; and now tarries abroad from choice; his name is on every man's tongue; it is no secret, it has travelled through the length and breadth of chattering French circles; it is known to all who care to learn it. But again, as we turn the street corner, I face the mother of Tolla;—truly a frousy Trojan of a woman, with the mottled flaring face, the flaunting dress, and the coarse stride!

A HORRIBLE REFLEXION.

I DID not at all like the face of that grinning Italian boy, who came up to the omnibus door, and sold me this cheap looking-glass, a foolish gimeracky sort of article, which, when it is shut up, looks like a broad, flat, tin watch, and which, when it is open, is to stand on the table, and reflect my chin to me during the process of shaving. Why did I buy the trumpery? I'm sure I don't know. I have plenty of mirrors in my own house, and I do not at present contemplate any emergency that would cause me to shave with my glass upon the table. Indeed, I never shave myself at all, but invariably employ a barber.

Some purchases are only made under the influence of a certain mania for disbursement, which may be reckoned among the most essential qualities of human nature. Who in the world ever dreams of using a knife, with a handle upwards of an inch thick, and half a dozen blades, including a corkscrew? No one; yet such articles are constantly bought, or they would not be constantly manufactured. Machines for damping post-office stamps, for depriving cigars of their curly tails, for curiously igniting tapers, are invented every year, and are bought by persons, who are thoroughly aware that nature has provided man with the simplest and most efficient means for wetting stamps and nipping cigars, and that no instrument devised for the purpose of speedy ignition is superior to the common lucifer, or the more delicate Vesta. They know the old plans, and in the depth of

their hearts intend to abide by them, yet they wantonly patronise innovations that are no improvement.

Children, with the exception of a few precocious misers, are habitually under the influence of the disbursing mania. According to a proverbial expression, their money "burns a hole in their pockets," a phrase doubtless invented by some close-fisted philosopher, who, regarding avarice as essential to humanity, attributed the rapid separation of children and their money, not to prodigal instinct in the opulent juveniles, but to a disposition in the coin itself to escape from a narrow pocket—a disposition perfectly consistent with its character as a circulating medium. When I look at the rubbish in my hand, which it would be flattery to call a bauble, but which is too useless to be called anything else, I am inclined to think that the doctrine implied by the close-fisted philosopher was not altogether absurd. It cost me sixpence, and most assuredly sixpence could not have been so expended as to have procured a smaller amount of enjoyment than this wretched machine will afford. Shall I say, then, that I bought it, not because I wanted it (which I certainly did not), but because the sixpence longed to get out of my pocket, and seized on the first available means of escape? I don't know; I feel humiliated when I fancy that the coin would less willingly remain in my possession than in that of the ill-favoured Italian.

I become dozy under these reflections, which, goodness knows, are dull enough to justify any amount of sleepiness, when I am suddenly wakened up by a most extraordinary circumstance—yes, by something really harrowing.

Idly glancing at the trumpery glass which I hold in my hand, I perceive that the face it reflects is—not my own!

A man may fairly set a just value on his own merits, without incurring the suspicion of vanity. Goethe once declared, that if on the one hand he considered himself far inferior to Shakespeare, he deemed himself, on the other hand, better than Ludwig Tieck. In a similar spirit I affirm that, if I am a trifle less handsome than Hubert Binsdale, I am infinitely better looking than the face which is reflected in the cheap glass.

Have I bought a picture instead of a glass? No! I screw up my delicately-chiselled nose, and make a grimace at it; with its rough-hewn proboscis it returns the compliment. I wink at it with, I am sure, the most refined insinuation of shrewdness; it returns the wink with a repulsively knowing air, as if it invited me to take part in a burglary. Ugly, incorrect, abominable as it is, the face is still no pictured physiognomy, but really and truly a reflexion of my own.

Ah, there are articles called cylindrical looking-glasses, which, like the inside of a table-spoon, confer ridiculous length or breadth on the countenance they reflect. I recollect that on one occasion, when I was at a public dinner, extremely angry and discomposed at the tardy appearance of the viands, I saw my own face

in the opposite tablespoon, grinning with idiotic delight. Cylindrical looking-glasses produce these distortions much more efficiently than tablespoons; but they don't change the colour of the hair, the eyes, the complexion, like this thing in my hand. Decidedly it is not a cylindrical looking-glass.

The omnibus stops at New Fangle Villa, where I am to dine. I slip the hateful commodity into my pocket, pay my fare, and, after the usual preliminaries, enter my host's drawing-room. My embarrassment is increased by the circumstance that I do not know a single person in the assembly except the host, with whom I am very slightly acquainted. I say to a hard-featured old lady (my host's mother), "How's your glass?" and I ask the host himself if his face is improved. I desperately correct my blunders, try to drown them in a laugh in which nobody joins, and observe two cubs in their teens looking at me from a corner, and whispering.

Must I pass a whole evening in the midst of this uncongenial society, with an unsolved mystery in my coat-pocket? Ah, one gentleman is alone in the back drawing-room, turning over a volume of prints. He shall be my unconscious assistant in my search after truth. I place myself at his side.

"Engravings," I observe, violently endeavouring to connect the subject of my thoughts with the object of his meditations—"engravings, however carefully and skilfully executed, are, under ordinary circumstances, less faithful semblances than the reflexion in a mirror."

"Under *any* circumstances," replies the gentleman, dryly. He thinks I have uttered an absurd truism. He is not aware, like myself, of the frightful exception to the general rule.

"Some engravings are very cheap," I proceed, with as much wisdom as I can muster.

"Some engravings are dear at any price," sulkily answers the gentleman.

"But of all the cheap things I ever saw, nothing equals this." So saying, I pull the glass from my pocket.

"Things like that cost fourpence, I believe," remarks the gentleman. The remark is discouraging, but I continue, putting the glass in his hand: "Look in that, and tell me if you perceive anything singular in the countenance."

"I see nothing but my own face," replies the gentleman, and disdainfully returning the glass, he stalks, with an offended air, into the front drawing-room. For the first time I observe that he has a broken nose, and it is evident that he detects in my question an allusion to that circumstance.

But what care I for the feelings of that morose lover of art? I have enough to occupy my mind during dinner-time. The curmudgeon has enlightened me as to the fact that the glass can reflect other faces faithfully, though it persists in mendacity when my own is presented. Its attack upon me is clearly personal.

Conversation turns upon an artist who painted his own likeness, and somebody observes that this operation is attended with more than or-

dinary difficulty, inasmuch as a man never retains in his mind so clear an image of himself as of another person. Is it possible that I have been mistaken as to my own face, and that the hideous reflexion in the sixpenny mirror is faithful after all? While the rest are engaged in talk, I furtively snatch the glass from my pocket, and holding it below the level of the table, regard it with a hasty glance, and perceive the old vulgar, villainous countenance. I raise my eyes in disgust, and I observe that one of the cubs who were whispering in the corner is telegraphing to a very young lady on the opposite side of the table, and that I myself as I sit, apparently absorbed in the contemplation of my own knees, furnish matter for his communications. I drop the glass, and in my efforts to pick it up again without observation, render myself generally conspicuous. I succeed in slipping it into my pocket, but not till it has been seen by the surly lover of art, whose eyes meet mine, and are then instantly averted, with the expression of a revived sense of wrong.

I now look forward with terrible interest to the return of the company to the drawing-room. I intend to look at myself in the large mirror over the mantelpiece, and to compare the reflexion there with that in the sixpenny glass. Then shall I know to a certainty whether my memory, under the influence of some unknown feeling of vanity, has been inaccurate in its record of my personal appearance, or whether the glass has been the deceiver.

My host's wine is excellent, but I detest it as an obstacle that retards our return to the drawing-room, and when he cheerfully orders another bottle of singularly choice claret ('37, I think), he renders me as fidgety as though he had ordered a bowl of the Borgia poison. I empty my glass very fast, as though I should thus accelerate the moment of retiring. It comes at last: I jump up with avidity at my host's proposal to "join the ladies;" I am first on the staircase; first in the front drawing-room, where I nod hastily, utter a senseless compliment to the galaxy of beauty that presents itself; and then retreat through the folding-doors to the adjoining apartment, which is fortunately empty. I place myself in front of the looking glass over the mantelpiece, I draw the small mirror from my pocket, I compare the reflexions in both, and—my vanity is satisfied. The face in the large glass is just such a face as I thought I possessed; the vulgar, villainous countenance which the small one still presents is not a bit like it.

Yes, my vanity is satisfied, but at what price? Of what horrible article am I the possessor? I have made every possible attempt to account for the perverse reflexion on natural grounds, and all have failed. Am I the owner of a bottle-imp, with the bottle squeezed flat and quicksilvered into a mirror, and the imp attenuated into the semblance of an inaccurate reflexion?

How long I am occupied with these meditations, which I pursue in front of the large glass, holding the small one open in my hand, I cannot say, but they are brought to an end by the sound

of a distant titter. My eye is directed to the front room, and I perceive that I am carefully watched by the two cubs and the very young lady, who are now seated on a sofa which perfectly commands my position.

I take a hasty leave, and, though I am the first to depart, the host does not press me to stay. He never asked me before; my visit has proved a failure, and he will never ask me again. His mother is still wondering what I could mean when I made inquiries respecting her glass; the supposed allusion to his broken nose still rankles in the bosom of the connoisseur. During dessert I offended another gentleman—a talkative admirer of Garibaldi—by the stupid remark that I felt no sympathy for Italians who sold bad looking-glasses. Then I always allowed myself to be addressed twice before I vouchsafed an answer, when I would start up, as if awakened from a dream, and generally utter a reply altogether inappropriate to the question. Decidedly I shall never be invited to New Fangle Villa again. My image will fade away from the minds of all those genteel ladies and gentlemen, never to be recalled; it will linger longest in the memory of the three juveniles, of whom the males will call me a "guy," the female, a "quiz."

I do not ride home, though my humble residence is somewhat distant from the very genteel district in which New Fangle Villa is situated. In the first place, I seem to have had enough of omnibuses; in the second, the exercise of walking is a kind of relief to the perturbed state of my mind. And yet there is a drizzling rain, and the conductors of the cumbrous vehicles are more than ordinarily solicitous for my patronage.

Some shops are still open, and whenever I pass one of uncommon brilliancy, I make a dead halt, and by the light of the gas take another survey of my hideous acquisition. I am desperately resolved to prove myself mistaken, but I can't succeed. By the light which is transmitted through a druggist's crimson bottle, the terrible "sham" appears absolutely appalling—a demon surrounded with a burning atmosphere.

At last I am at home, in my bedroom on the second floor, as I clearly ascertain by the correct reflexion of my face in the looking-glass that stands on my own toilette-table. I go to bed, having, after another inspection, carefully placed the dreadful little mirror under my pillow. Those who wonder why I do not pitch my abominable property out of window will never be able to understand the relation of the bird to the rattlesnake. I hate that loathsome mirror. I curse the hour in which I bought it; the Italian boy who sold it; the omnibus in which the purchase was made. But I would sooner have cut off my right hand, and cast it out of the window, than I would have flung away that sixpenny imposture. I even put my hand under my pillow before I doze off to sleep, that I may assure myself of its perfect safety.

I do not attain a thoroughly sound sleep; for at the last stage of dozing, in which the boun-

dary line between the actual and the imaginary is faint and indistinct, I am suddenly aroused by a thundering single knock at the street door. Who can it be? I am the only lodger in the house, and I am not accustomed to receive guests at this hour. My asthmatic old landlady goes to bed at ten, and cheerfully allows me a latch-key, as a talisman that will secure her own rest from interruption. Poor old creature, she would be frightened out of her wits did she hear the ill-timed noise. At all events, it must not be repeated. I will open the door myself.

I descend the stairs barefooted, for I cannot stay to grope about for my slippers, and when I reach the passage, the cold of the oil-cloth enters my soul, like the iron of Sterne's captive. The feel of the mat is comparatively warm, but harsh and ungrateful. I open the door, and—

Yes, I have opened the door, AND—clear in the light of the street gas, I see before me the owner of the face that is habitually reflected by my hateful little glass. I can't be mistaken in those coarse features, that air of vulgar familiarity and low cunning. No; there stands the original of the dreadful portrait that has dared to thrust itself where a reflexion of my own comely physiognomy ought to be. There he stands; and by him stands the Italian boy.

What am I to surmise from this visit? Has the Original—as I will briefly call him—has the Original already seized the Italian as the purloiner of his reflected countenance, and does he now come upon me as the receiver of the stolen property? Is this a sort of Peter Schlemihl affair, with an infusion of the Old Bailey?

The Original lays his hand on my shoulder, firmly, ponderously, as though he would press me through the door mat, and in a hoarse voice he says,

"Now then, governor, I think you wanted New Fangle Villa?"

The whole scene is changed, save that the Original and the Italian boy are still plainly in my presence. I am in an omnibus, occupying the corner next the window; the Original is the conductor, who has just wakened me out of a sound sleep, and the Italian boy, as his particular friend, has been blessed with the privilege of standing on the step.

The glass is in my hand, open—that, at least, is no illusion. I look into it; my own proper really good-looking face is reflected; a little spoiled, perhaps, by an expression of anxiety and alarm, but still my own delightful countenance. These expressions are not to be attributed to inordinate vanity but to the rapture which every man has a right to feel when the extraordinary good fortune befalls him of finding his own face when he thinks he has lost it.

"Now then, governor, I think you wanted New Fangle Villa," repeats the conductor, somewhat impatiently.

"How long have I slept?" I ask, hurriedly.

"Why you dropped asleep a'most as soon as you had bought that 'ere hartle of this 'ere party. You nodded over it like."

With a little reflection—of the right sort—

the mystery is explained. Sitting with the glass open in my hand, and placed at such an angle that it reflected the conductor's face instead of my own, I fell asleep, and was visited by a dream, of which the strange countenance was the foundation.

APPENDIX.

The incidents at New Fangle Villa do not in the least correspond to those prefigured in my dream. No ladies are present; my host is the jovial president of a bachelor's party; Garibaldi is not once mentioned; there is no scowling connoisseur with a broken nose,—everything goes on as cheerfully as possible, and I tell all my best stories amid unbounded laughter and applause.

JACK'S CASTLE UP THE LANE.

I HAD taken one of the omnibuses which run through the City to the Bank, and, seated by the side of the driver, was watching with much interest the manifold impediments which beset the way, when a peculiar rattle of iron and stone together, and the backing of a Hansom cab in our front, seemed to say there was a horse down upon the stones. And so it proved; and after the usual unlooping of chains, unbuckling of straps, and hauling at tangled traces, the omnibus (it was an omnibus horse) was set rolling upon the fallen animal, the other horse was whipped up smartly, and with another rattle and a strong plunge the prostrate beast scrambled to its feet. This was the third time in the course of the day that the like accident had occurred before my eyes, and it set me thinking of the perils and mischances to which our working horses in the streets of London are hourly exposed. I took the driver into my confidence:

"How long, now, will a horse stand this kind of racket?"

"Well," was the slow contemplative reply, "it depends on the horse, and the way he's drove."

"But how long, on an average, does an omnibus horse last?"

"Well, some on 'em last an uncommon long time. This one now," touching the head of the near horse in a tender way with the top of his whip, "this one I've had good sixteen year. But he's a wonder."

"Are there many horses killed in the streets?"

"Not many. They mostly get wore out. We often change our horses. Horses has tempers, like people, and some of 'em can't stand the worry and tearing in a 'bus. It's trying. Some horses get done right off. Sometimes they don't last more nor two or three months. But on the average, I should say, omnibus horses will last about five year."

"The cab horse, now, has a better time of it?"

"Well, I don't know that. They get more rest on the stand, to be sure; but they're haggled, while they're at it, terrible."

"I suppose your horses are not fit for much when you have done with them?"

"Not much; unless they're done with through bad temper. Certainly, there's some kind of work they can do—turn a mill, perhaps—but they worry often get hurt, if they don't get killed by falling and other accidents, and then it's all up with 'em."

"And they soon find themselves in the knacker's yard?"

"Why, yes," with a half sigh, and a gentle stroke of the whip on the side of the near horse. "They either gets a knock on the head at once, or, if they can walk, they're trotted up the Lane to 'Jack's,' and there's an end."

What horse, in a sane state of mind, can expect to die a natural death? It is true we occasionally hear of some gallant Bucephalus to whom his equally gallant master has, by codicil to his will, bequeathed an annuity of beans and oats and fresh pasture, in order that he may "pass away" in the due course of nature. But this is an excess of weakness which very few riders are guilty of, and a species of philanthropy which is oftener sneered at than imitated. What between the rough chances of the road and the poleaxe, the horse has very little prospect of living to a green old age; and sometimes we read of his immolation by pistol-shot, if he happen to have had a trooper for his master, over the grave of the dead soldier. A short life, if not a merry one, is the inevitable destiny of the working horse; and let no proud steed, in his moment of pampered ease, imagine he can escape the curse of labour, with the moral certainty of at last becoming the food of a lower race of animals.

Whenever a horse is down in the street, it will be noticed that the professional public—the horse public—take to "holding his head" in a very determined way, while the entanglement of straps and buckles is cleared; and that the favourite method of holding the animal's head is by sitting on it: a process no doubt very sedative and comforting to the beast itself. In this case, however, we will suppose there is no hope for the wounded creature. The horse public shakes its tousled head, and decides peremptorily: "He's a done-er, and no mistake!" A little while, and a clean trim cart, painted red, with a few fancy lines in white and black, and an open back and flap, dashes to the side of the prostrate animal. A sharp quick blow of the bright axe, a rapid motion with a little cane, a plunge or two on the part of the horse, and all is over. By the aid of a strong rope, the carcase is soon lifted into the open cart; and with swinging legs and hanging mane, and a fearfully disjointed motion of the head, the "poor old horse" is borne "up the lane" to Jack's private premises—Jack the horse-killer, or, according to his own style and title, "Horse Slaughterer to Her Majesty."

The "lane" is a mournful stretch of road, beginning with the dead side wall of a railway station, and ending in the dead side wall of a cattle market. It is cut into bits by a canal

and several railway bridges; has a tile-kiln in its centre; and is distinguishable throughout by dirt, dinginess, and obvious desolation. Vegetation has long since died throughout its whole length under the united influence of ash-dust, brick and tile burning, and the oleaginous vapour from more than one slaughter-house, and their contiguous manure depositories. The only lively things in it are a rope-yard, and an ink manufactory. Near its upper end is the famed "Belle-isle"—beautiful island—suggestive to a London ear of dust-heaps and dustmen; upon its south-western edge stands Jack's Castle: a substantial modern erection, of thoroughly respectable appearance.

As we have rattled up the lane in the rear of the red cart with its helplessly jolted burden, we have come upon another cart of the same colour, to the tail-board of which is tied a melancholy piece of horse-flesh, still alive, and with a jaunty skittishness in its motions, as if, in the unaccustomed freedom from collar, harness, and other similar restraints, it had forgotten all its past ills, and had some wild notion of being out "for a lark." And yet, he is going to Jack's too. We all pass together under a railway arch, and are upon the edge of Jack's demesne; made up of the horse-yard, a public-house, and the castle aforesaid.

If a momentary palpitation be awakened in our bosom by the thought of the reception we are likely to meet from Jack the horse-killer in our intended investigation of his premises, it is soon allayed by the bearing of Jack himself. A hale elderly man, tall and stout, with an open countenance and a clear eye, received our request for information, with the frank reply, "Go down the yard."

The yard-gate has nothing to defend it but a simple latch, and we walk in. On the left hand, as we enter, we almost stumble upon the disjecta membra of the dead, in the shape of a heap of horses' feet, cut off at the first joint, and piled up a yard and a half high in the corner. On the right hand, and stretching away under a shed at the end of the yard, are some eighteen or twenty live horses, tethered by ropes to staples in the wall. They have a few wisps of hay scattered at their feet, and although all in a more or less sorry condition, exhibit something of the jaunty spirit which was evident in the unharnessed hack we overtook on the road.

The stone-paved yard is cleanly swept and washed, and we sniff no unpleasant odours in the air. To be sure there are small clouds of flies here and there hovering over the dead feet and the live horses, but even they are not so numerous as one might expect. We tap at the open door of a small house at the end of the yard, and are speedily joined by a small dapper man in a wide-awake: Mr. Frankman, who, in an off-hand, ready way, offers at once to conduct us over the premises. He talks as he proceeds:

"Them horses, now, are waiting their turn. Some of 'em will be for to-morrow morning, according to number of dead ones brought in. We

slaughter about twenty a day, from one hundred and twenty to one hundred and thirty a week. We must have some live stock to make up with. Them feet, you see, are only waiting to be taken away. We sell them as they are; they take the shoes off, and make glue and buttons of the rest. This is the slaughter-house."

We stand before an open folding-door on the left hand of the yard, leading into a large substantial barn-like building. We enter with our guide. At a rough guess it is about twenty feet broad by forty feet deep, and is paved with broad flags sloping from the side to the centre, so as to form a gutter throughout two-thirds of its length, and in the middle of which is square iron grating. On either hand, lie the carcasses and bones of horses in different stages of slaughterdom. Two lie untouched as they fell: a third is skinned, has had its legs taken out at the socket, and is in course of being stripped of its flesh. Spread out towards the upper end on the right, is collected the flesh of a horse, ready for boiling.

"And a fine animal he was, with more than two hundred-weight of meat on his bones."

Some few ragged bundles of cooked meat hang on hooks against the wall. This on the right hand. On the left, the most conspicuous object is the red skeleton of a horse, without the head and legs. The head lies close by. Stripped by a skilful hand of every particle of flesh, it offers its ghastly outline to the sight, awaiting the bone-boiler. In the corner, packed into neat square bundles, and looking something like the wet knapsacks of Prussian soldiers, are the separate skins of horses. These also are sold. All this is much less revolting to the eye than in print. The sloping nature of the pavement readily conducts offence to the grating, through which it passes, and is saved for manure and other purposes. There is evidently plenty of water, and no lack in the use of it. The place is excessively clean. In the centre of the shed at the upper end stands a square brick furnace, and on either hand a large iron boiler with the lid raised. Both are dry and clean, and Mr. Frankman points out, with a dry chuckle and evident pride, a large iron siphon through which the vapour from the boilers is conducted into the furnace and there consumed.

The entrance of Jack at this moment gives us an opportunity of testing his opinion of our French friends' late experiments in hippognos-tromy. He chuckles audibly over the notion of making horseflesh the ordinary food of any living creatures but dogs and cats: at the same time delivers a decided opinion in preference of a meal off a good sound horse, any day, to one off any of the diseased cows of which he often sees a number in the adjoining cattle market. A short visit, at the suggestion and under the conduct of our dapper guide, to the "guv'nor's" own stables, shows us a different quality of horseflesh. Seven sleek well-groomed horses, of unexceptionable proportions, each in his clean, wholesome stall, give us a good notion of the

care and taste of the "guy'nor," and of the requirements of his trade. "We must have good horses for our work," says Mr. Frankman, "and the guy'nor is *so* particular in everything. A man to clean the harness, a man to see to the feed, and to the stables, makes everything as it ought to be; and he *WILL* have it as it ought to be, in the yard and in the slaughter-house, as well as in the stables."

So it appears to us also; and although we have our private opinion—and it is a very strong one—as to the wrongful state of the law which permits the carrying on of such trades, however necessary in themselves, in baneful proximity to an over-crowded city, we admit that the "guy'nor" conducts a most offensive business in the least offensive way possible. And so, good day to Jack the horse-killer, and his castle.

Within a radius of five miles from Charing-cross there die, on an average, three hundred horses a week. Some are killed outright, but the majority are slaughtered. A dead horse, or one sold to the knackers, will fetch from twenty to sixty shillings, according to his size and condition. Average value, forty shillings. The weight of a single animal varies from six hundred and eighty to one thousand one hundred and forty pounds. Average weight, nine hundred and fifty pounds. As for the produce, only general results can be arrived at; there are secrets in all trades, and the horse trade is no exception. Taking the average as before, each horse will yield a pound and a half of hair, in value from eighteen pence to a shilling a pound. This is employed in the manufacture of hair-cloth bags, mattresses, and plumes—those lustrous plumes which crown the hearse. The hide, weighing about thirty pounds, will fetch some eight shillings for crushing seed in oil-mills, and is used besides as the covering of hair-trunks. The tendons may weigh six pounds, and yield glue and gelatine. Of meat boiled, a horse will yield, on an average, two hundred and twenty-four pounds, which at three halfpence a pound, gives twenty-eight shillings. Three hundred horses, giving two hundred and twenty-four pounds of boiled meat each, yield a total of thirty tons of cat's-meat a week! It is, of course, generally understood that this vast produce is especially provided for cats and dogs only, but there is a strong suspicion abroad that it is sold to some extent for human food. Next comes the blood, which will weigh about sixty pounds, and is converted into prussiate of potash, and most valuable manure. Of the heart and tongue, the less said, the better. We might not enjoy our neat's tongue the more, if we suspected it to be a horse's; and the suspicion that our coffee, besides its proportion of chicory, was seasoned with a horse's baked heart and liver, properly ground, might abate our thorough enjoyment

of the soothing cup. The intestines will weigh about eighty pounds, and are employed as skins for sausages, "small Germans," and the like. Twenty pounds of fat will be worth about three shillings and sixpence, and, when distilled, become excellent lamp oil. Of bones there will be about one hundred and sixty pounds' weight, at four shillings and sixpence a hundred-weight, and they are made available for a great variety of purposes. They yield phosphorus and superphosphate of lime, when they are not manufactured into snuff-boxes, knife-handles, and a hundred other knick-knacks of more or less utility. The hoofs will weigh six pounds, and, when not devoted to the production of gelatine and prussiates, make very handsome buttons. The shoes are always worth the price of old iron, and are more valuable to some people for good luck.

It will be seen that the best use possible is made of the horse after death; might not something be said in favour of his better treatment when living, by a horse-loving nation such as we are? Let us hope that, under the instruction of our modern horse-professors, a new law of kindness will be brought into force.

My driver of the City 'bus had a word to say to the public on that subject: "The public ought to be told—and it's surprisin' to me they're not told already—that they do not—no they do NOT—use the 'bus horses fair. They're continually stoppin' of 'em when in full run. They won't walk two yards, the public won't, to save stoppin' the 'bus. One minit it's 'Whoa!' and there's the public half a dozen yards a head on the near side, a makin' us stop a purpose for 'em. I don't say it's done out of spite—the public is werry considerate—but they ought to be told that this sort of thing knocks up the omnibus horses worse than all. If the public had a 'bus behind 'em of over a ton weight, and twenty passengers added on, they'd werry often think twice afore they'd call out 'Whoa!' when they could help it."

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